

DISCOURSES
ON THE FALL
AND
MISERY OF MAN,
AND ON THE
COVENANT OF GRACE.

BY RICHARD TAYLOR, A. M.



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THE
PREFACE.

LA M very sensible, that the following discourses will need no recommendation, to such as were acquainted with the author; they who knew his eminent piety, accurate judgment, and disinterested zeal for truth, will easily observe, that the same spirit that was conspicuous in him whilst he lived, breaths throughout these performances. The reader may be assured, that they were

A 2 pre-

iv THE PREFACE.

prepared for the press by the author; of this any discerning person will be sensible that reads them, for there are none of those inaccuracies to be found in them, that often deform posthumous pieces. Few bestow'd more pains than the author, on all his compositions, but of these discourses, which he wrote a few years before his death, he took more than ordinary care. He did not set about them, 'till he had well weighed the importance and difficulty of the subjects contained in them. As he design'd them, chiefly, for the giving plain christians a distinct account of the great doctrines treated of in them, he waved going far in the controversial part, and contented himself with stating them accurately, and briefly proving them by plain scripture; for he knew that distinctly handling the argumentative part, and attempting to answer all cavils and objections, would raise the discourses above the capacity of common christians, and make them only proper for those of learned

THE PREFACE. V

learned attainments. So that the reader is not to expect controversial discussions of every difficulty that may be raised, but will find the plain scripture-doctrine of the primitive state of man, of his fall, of the misery thence resulting, of imputed guilt, of original corruption, of the covenant of grace, contrived for the recovery and salvation of fallen man, and of the different relations Christ bore in that covenant, briefly stated, and proved from scripture, and some of the most common, and most weighty objections considered and answered. Here will be found no fallies of a wanton imagination, to explain the manner of any scripture mystery, such attempts the author was a great enemy to, because he thought it was affecting to be wise above what is written, and always observed that they who let their imaginations rove that way, encreased difficulties, instead of lessening them. His appeal was to the word, and to the scripture-testimony; whatever he found

A 3 there,

vi THE PREFACE.

there, or gather'd from thence by plain consequence, he was always ready to receive and defend ; but nice questions about things not revealed, he never reckon'd worth his regard.

It is not to be expected that treatises, wrote according to the scheme which the author of these discourses embraced, will be relish'd by many, at a time when the mysteries of christianity are so generally despised and ridiculed ; and it will not be matter of wonder, if many things here deliver'd, be made the subject of banter and raillery ; for now every empty pert opiniator, that has got the poor talent of confidence, and has laid hold, perhaps, on one or two difficulties, (that will remain difficulties to every man, whilst he continues in a state of imperfection,) thinks he is sufficiently qualified to treat the most sublime doctrines with rudeness and contempt, and to fix the brand of ignorance, stupidity, or blind credulity, on every person who does not fall in with him, in the notions

THE PREFACE. vii

tions he has taken up, and that, often-times, on no other account, than because they are fashionable.

It is very certain, that nothing is more laudable in itself, or more ornamental to human nature, than a free unprejudic'd search after truth: and nothing is more unworthy of a man, than a blind reception of any opinion, without previous examination. But impartial observers will hardly perceive, that the cavils which are continually, in our days, raised against the doctrines of christianity, are the effects of close and impartial examination. It is not a tenacious pertness in urging a few objections, against a received doctrine, and a noisy charging it with absurdity, nonsense, and contradiction, that will make a man pass for a sincere enquirer after truth, because it is very easy to object against any thing; whereas, to weigh with care the difficulties that arise on each side of a question, and upon due examination to fall in with that which is most agreeable to scripture,

A 4 and

viii THE PREFACE.

and is attended with fewest difficulties, requires more thought, application and humility, than can commonly be found among them who oppose the christian doctrines, in our time.

When persons read the scriptures, they ought to lay aside all prejudices and pre-conceptions, their minds should be free and open to receive the truth, and they should come to the oracles of God without a bias upon their spirits: for as a man that views things thro' a colour'd glass, thinks every thing to be of the same colour with his glass; so when men are under the pre-occupations of some mistake, and are led by partiality to this or that error, they think such scriptures speak for it, as in reality speak against it; and as long as they entertain a good liking of any false opinion, if they address themselves to the word, they will think every page of the scripture speaks only for their sentiments. And as they will, when they are enamour'd on any error, wrest
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the scriptures which make most against it, to speak in favour of it; so when they are full of any darling notion, they think all absurdity lies on the side of the contrary opinion; and tho' there may be more and greater absurdities attending their own, yet they can descry none of them.

Thus, for instance, when a man, full of himself, and resolutely set upon advancing his own reason above the wisdom of revelation, comes to think upon the adorable mystery of the blessed Trinity, he, it may be, cannot conceive how three can be one, nor how Christ can be the supreme, necessarily existing God, without his being the eternal Father, (points which, it must be own'd, transcend the understandings of men, and perhaps of angels;) and therefore he presently charges the doctrine with nonsense, and contradiction: but he never discovers the glaring absurdities, that are easily to be seen on the other side; he thinks there is no absurdity in asserting

x THE PREFACE.

asserting a dependent God ; he finds no nonsense in framing a being that is neither God, in a proper sense, nor yet a creature ; he sees no contradiction in affirming, that the creator of all things derived his own being from another ; and he apprehends no polytheism in maintaining two Gods, one supreme, and the other subordinate, and in setting up two objects of worship. These shocking absurdities attend, more or less, every scheme that is calculated to rob Christ of the glory of his true Deity ; and the framers of these schemes themselves seem so sensible of them, that they seldom care to let their genuin opinions be known ; they may do this indeed to avoid popular censure, but they likewise themselves seem to be afraid to view the absurd consequences, that necessarily flow from their tenets.

The case is often the same, with a man, that, full of spiritual pride, and abounding with a conceit of his own worth, resolves that his sincerity shall

be his justifying righteousness before God, and not the righteousness of Christ alone: such a person thinks it irrational, that any should be justified by the obedience of another; he reckons an imputed righteousness to be a dream, and he can see no need of holiness, or sincere obedience, if it must not be his plea before the bar of God; not considering how absurd it is to fancy, that obedience accompanied with imperfections can, on the account of its sincerity, be acceptable to a God of infinite perfection; nor thinking how contrary to reason it is to imagine, that the satisfaction made by Christ, an infinite person, can have any thing added to it, by what is done by frail feeble creatures.

As too many take upon them, in a bold way, to scoff at the doctrines of the gospel, while, thro' prejudice, they do not consider the difficulties attending their own opinions; so there are many others, who are wholly indifferent about

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xii THE PREFACE.

matters of faith, and think there is not much stress to be laid on doctrinal opinions; but to be altogether careless about the doctrines of christianity, contradicts the express commands of the scriptures, which, in the warmest manner, require us to hold fast the faithful word, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and it recommends lukewarmness, as a great virtue, which must needs be a very great judgment, because Christ has declared his displeasure against it, and his resolution to punish it, in terms that may justly make a man tremble.

It is not to be imagined that the discourses now presented to the world will be relish'd, either by those who give themselves the silly liberty of jeering what they do not understand, or by those who think the doctrines of the gospel not worth contending for: but it is hoped these practical discourses may be of use to such as have tasted that the Lord is gracious, who

feel and experience the miseries brought by the fall, and are sensible of the burden of indwelling sin. and who under their burden, have found relief from the consideration of that everlasting covenant, made with them in Christ, which is order'd in all things and sure, and which makes the most ample provision for their salvation. Such may, perhaps, find these discourses useful, to convey to them accurate and distinct conceptions concerning some important truths, and may meet with that in them, which may confirm their faith, and strengthen their experience, if God be pleased to follow them with his blessing.

Thro' all these discourses runs a nervous brevity, join'd with great perspicuity of expression ; they are as free from verbose circumlocutions, as they are from confusion and obscurity ; the main drift of them is, to shew the weakness and impotence of fallen man, to exalt the riches and freeness of the

xiv THE PREFACE.

the grace of God, and to magnify Christ.

In the first part of these discourses, man is view'd in his primæval state of rectitude, in which he was possess'd of all manner of outward pleasures and delights, and bore the image of God, which was the conformity of his soul to God, in knowlege and holiness; the tenure by which he held this happiness is consider'd, which was the covenant of works, made with him and all his posterity in him as their head, promising life, on condition of perfect obedience, and threatening death, in case of disobedience. Then it is shew'd, how man being in honor continued not; the greatness of his sin is manifested, and it is set forth, how he, by hearkening to the subtil insinuations of a cunning tempter, disrobed himself of the garment of his primitive integrity; defaced the image of God's holiness, which was the glory of his innocence; forfeited the favor of God, which was his

his highest happiness; and incur'd his displeasure, which was his greatest misery, in that it expos'd him to the curse of the law, to temporal death, in his body, to spiritual death, in his soul, and to eternal death, in the other world; or to a state of punishment, where life is the greatest burden, where hope dies, where despair reigns, where death lives, and where pain is felt, beyond what invention can feign, and fear can conceive. The holiness and justice of God, in inflicting this punishment on man, is then vindicated, from the consideration, how easy it would have been for man to have obey'd the law, and from the necessity there was, for God to vindicate the truth of his threatening, to magnify the honor of his law, and to shew his hatred against sin.

Then some of the direful effects of the fall are consider'd; such as the imputation of *Adam's* sin to all his posterity, which is shew'd to be just and reasonable, in that we were all in him,
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xvi THE PREFACE.

as our covenant head: the original corruption of man's nature, or the deriving, from the first man, a corrupt nature by way of punishment for imputed guilt, is next consider'd; it is prov'd, that the souls of all men are corrupted by birth; and original sin is described, and the great evil of it is shew'd. The consideration of actual sins follows, but as this opened into a large field of discourse, the author chose to insist only on sinful thoughts, which are proved to be altogether and exceeding sinful: one instance is chose by him, to set forth the sinfulness of the thoughts, and that is worshiping of images, which is proved to proceed from sinful thoughts and imaginations of God, and is shew'd to be a most aggravated sin.

In the second part of these discourses, the author treats of the covenant of grace, which has not always been treated with due accuracy: there are but few treatises on this subject, in the *English* tongue, and those we have are seldom

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consistent throughout. The author begins with enquiring into the nature of the covenant God the Father made with Christ, and with all the elect in him, as his seed, (as the *Westminster* assembly excellently expresses it,) and with shewing what the Father promised, and what the Son engaged to do, in this covenant of peace, that was between them both ; and here, by the way, he corrects the mistake of some divines, who make a double covenant, one of redemption, made by God with Christ, and the other of reconciliation, made by God with believers thro' Christ. Afterwards Christ is consider'd in the several relations he bore in ratifying and confirming the covenant of grace ; his suretiship is explain'd, and the advantages redounding from thence to his people, are enumerated ; his confirming the covenant of grace by his death, as a testator, is consider'd ; and his work, as a mediator both for redemption and intercession, is explained, and

xviii THE PREFACE.

his fitness for it proved ; and, in conclusion, the stability of the covenant of grace is manifested, from its not leaving the event to the uncertainty of conditions performed by us, and the ample provision made therein for salvation, is set forth.

This is the substance of these discourses, the author of which made it the chief business of his preaching, whilst he lived, to plead for the sovereign freeness of God's grace, for the perfection of the satisfaction Christ made to the justice of God, and for the necessity of trusting to his imputed righteousness, in order to justification. He at the same time was very careful to press to the following of holiness, without which it is impossible to see or enjoy God. And as he was a person of most eminent piety, and of the most blameless circumspect conversation, he was a credit to the doctrine of grace, which he preached ; and he never could be charged with acting in such a way as might

might bring dishonor on the glorious gospel of God his Savior.

He had a very great and uncommon knowlege of the scriptures; the word of God was what he studied with the greatest delight; he had a very exact judgment in all parts of divinity, and had throughly weigh'd all the controversies, relating to any of the doctrines of christianity. He was very well versed in all parts of literature, tho' he studiously avoided shewing his learning, even when his subject might have led him to it; for he thought it no better than ostentation, for a man to shew his learning, before them who were not proper judges of it. In his stile, he avoided, on the one hand, great swelling words of vanity; and, on the other, shun'd all mean coarse expressions; he was fill'd with indignation at the meanness of expression some have run into, under pretence of suiting themselves to mean capacities; for he thought the truth did not make the better ap-

xx THE PREFACE.

pearance by its being cloath'd in rags; he thought no words could be too good, provided they were clear, to set off the great doctrines of christianity: he did not indeed use art, or give way to affectation, but he follow'd nature, so that his stile is just, strong, grave and masculine; and sometimes there are in his pieces strokes of eloquence that exceed what is to be found in the writings of some, who pretend to much more politeness, than ever he affected to attain to.

That which was the most distinguishing part of his character, was a most unvarnish'd sincerity, and an honest disinterested zeal for the truths of the gospel. Error he could give no quarter to, and a politic silence, when truth was attack'd, was what his honest soul abhor'd. Not but that he had as generous sentiments as to liberty, and against persecution, as any man; this may be seen from some things of his, which have before been publish'd. Tho'

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he was at the greatest distance from thinking favorably of persecution ; yet he never, under that pretence, could stand still, as an unconcern'd spectator, to see the truths of the gospel run down, but thought it his duty, in a christian way, to contend for them, and openly to declare what he believed in his heart ; for he never thought any thing that would not bear confessing, to be worth holding. Wrath and anger, and personal reflections, in religious controversies, were his aversion ; but there was nothing was more detestable in his esteem, than that false moderation, that could only shew it self in giving up the truths of the gospel, but was yet consistent with shewing the greatest rancor and bitterness of spirit, towards them that shew'd a zeal for Christ, and the truths of his word.

The more he grew in years, and the nearer a future state was presented to his view, the more he was pleased with what he had done, in bearing witness to the

xxii THE PREFACE.

the truth. The thoughts of this made his death-bed easy to him; and his never having shun'd to declare the whole council of God, was a pleasant reflection to him, when he was going to leave the world: his keeping the word of Christ's patience, in his day and generation, was matter of joy to him, when his days on earth drew near to a close. And as he made it his work to exalt Christ, and defend his truth, so the good master whom he served left him not without unusual supports at the last; so that it was a wonder to all that were about him, to see, in the midst of bodily pain, the greatest composedness of spirit, without any ruffle; and the greatest joy and serenity, without any doubt or discouraging fear. It had been for him to live, Christ; and therefore to die to him was gain; having faithfully fulfill'd the ministry committed to him here, and having testified the gospel of the grace of God, he could quietly yield up his spirit, with saying, I

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THE PREFACE. xxiii

am going to meet my glorious Redeemer. Having fought the good fight, and kept the faith, and expecting the crown of immortality and glory, only as the free gift of God, and the reward of Christ's obedience, he could with a prosperous gale, and with sails full spread, launch forth into the ocean of eternity, because his leaving this world was only that he might be for ever present with the Lord.

It is hoped that the publication of these discourses may, by the blessing of God, be some way or other useful, to confirm others in the belief of those truths which the author found so much comfort from; and it is heartily wish'd, that the Spirit which rested on him may fill many that are left behind him, that they may be followers of his faith, remembering the end of his conversation.

THE

24 OC 62



THE CONTENTS.



PART I.

Of the fall and misery of man.

I.

Of the primitive state of man. From
Gen. i. 26. Page 1

1.		<i>F the image of God wherein man was created.</i> 8
2.		<i>Of the created happiness of man.</i> 13
3.		<i>Of the covenant of works.</i> 16
4.		<i>The application.</i> 27

II.

Of the fall of man. From *Eccl. vii. 29.* 27

1.	<i>How man came to fall.</i> 38
2.	<i>Of the greatness of the sin that brought the fall.</i> 47
3.	<i>Of</i>

THE CONTENTS.

3. Of the misery consequent on the fall.	53
4. A vindication of God's justice in punishing the first man's sin.	61
5. The application.	69

III.

Of the imputation of <i>Adam's</i> sin. From <i>Rom. v. 29.</i>	77
--	----

1. Adam's sin proved to be imputed to his posterity.	83
2. Of the grounds of the imputation of Adam's sin.	85
3. The application.	87

IV.

Of original sin. From <i>Eph. ii. 1.</i>	95
--	----

1. How all persons come to be corrupted by birth.	104
2. The frame of the souls of all men proved to be corrupted by birth.	106
3. A description of original sin.	110
4. Of the great evil of original sin.	115
5. The application.	121

V.

Of sinful thoughts. From <i>Gen. vi. 5.</i>	139
---	-----

1. The thoughts of men in their fallen state proved to be sinful.	145
2. Of the various kinds of sinful thoughts.	149
3. Of the aggravation of the sinfulness of the thoughts.	165
4. The application.	193

PART

THE CONTENTS.



P A R T II.

Of the covenant of grace.

I.

Of the covenant between God the Father and Christ. From *Psal. lxxxix. 3.* 213

1.  *HE proof of a covenant between God the Father and Christ.* 211
2. *Of the relation Christ stood in, when the Father made a covenant with him, and when this covenant was made.* 222
3. *Of the nature of the covenant of grace.* 228
4. *Of the stipulations of the Father, and re-stipulations of Christ, in the covenant of grace.* 235

II.

Of Christ the surety of the covenant of grace. From *Heb. vii. 22.* 247

1. *Of a surety, and how Christ is the surety of the covenant of grace.* 252
2. *Wherein Christ as a surety differs from sureties amongst men.* 256
3. *Of the advantages resulting from Christ's suretiship.* 262

III. Of

THE CONTENTS.

III.

Of Christ the testator of the covenant of grace. From *Heb.* ix. 6. 267

1. *What Christ did as a testator.* 271
2. *Of the heirs in Christ's testament.* 277
3. *Why Christ, as a testator, died to confirm the covenant of grace.* 280
4. *The application.* 284

IV.

Of Christ the mediator of the covenant of grace. From *1 Tim.* ii. 15. 291

1. *Of the work of Christ the mediator.* 297
2. *Of Christ's fitness for the work of a mediator.* 299
3. *The application.* 314

V.

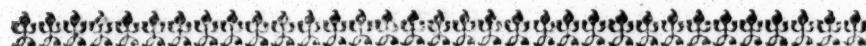
Of the stability of the covenant of grace, and of the ample provision made therein for the salvation of sinners. From *2 Sam.* xxii. 5. 329

1. *The covenant of grace proved to be most sure and stable.* 338
2. *Of the ample provision made in the covenant of grace for salvation.* 347
3. *The application.* 24 OC 62 364

OF



OF THE
PRIMITIVE STATE
 OF
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GEN. I. 26.

*God said, Let us make man in our image,
 after our likeness.*



E do not see the evil of sin, in defacing God's workmanship in us, and bringing the greatest deformity upon us, when we do not first take a view of the goodness of God, in creating us in a state of perfection ; nor are we sensible of the misery which

which is come upon us, by our apostacy from God, if we have not some previous information concerning the happiness, of which we were depriv'd, by our departure from him. We cannot fathom the depth of that gulph, into which sin has plunged us, if we do not take the measure of that felicity from whence we fell ; for to know the value and worth of what we have lost, is the way to bring us to consider the greatness of our present wo. It is with a prospect to this, that I have chose to speak from the words which have been cited.

There are two things to be noted in the words.

I. A consultation, held among the divine persons of the Trinity, about the creation of man. When the world was made, the persons of the sacred Trinity entered into a consultation, about the creation of man. *God said, Let us make man.* This form of speech proves, with no small strength of evidence, that there is a Trinity, at least a plurality, of persons, in the Godhead, or divine essence ; for it would have been the highest impropriety of speech, for God to have spoke thus, if there had been no distinct persons in the Godhead, for him to speak to.

Some say, that God here spoke in the stile which kings use, who speak of themselves in the plural number. I answer ; this has nothing of probability, much less any shadow of truth in it, God did not here speak

speak *stile regio*. Nay, none of the Jewish kings ever spoke in that dialect, which is now the stile of kings: it is a superlative phrenzy, and daring folly, to measure the language of the Scriptures, and especially the language of God himself, in the creation, by that which is the modern stile of *Europe*. God spoke thus, where it would be directly against the grammar of the words, to say, he spoke *stile regio*. Gen. iii. 22. *The Lord God said, behold, the man is become as one of us.* Let any one think what the grammatical sense of the words would be, if God had spoke here of himself, in the present stile of kings; how would it sound, and what harsh nonsense would it be, if a king, speaking of himself alone, should say, this or that man strives to be like one of us. The doctrine of the Trinity is a truth which is above reason, as well as sense, but it ought to be much for our satisfaction, and our establishment in the belief of it, that we have a proof of it as early as the first creation, and we have most ample proofs of it in the second creation, or in our redemption through Christ Jesus.

II. When the persons of the Trinity consulted about the creation of man, the result of their counsel was, to make him the most perfect and happy creature, in this lower world. *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* Some distinguish here between image and likeness; image, say they,

noted the form of man, with respect to his soul, as he was created a spiritual substance, or spirit; likeness, say they, noted the quality planted in his soul, which was a conformity to God in holiness.

The other creatures were God's works, but man was not barely God's work, but was made in his image. It is fully express'd, how it was that man was created. *Gen. ii. 7. The*

Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. The body of man was formed out of the dust of the earth. *The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.* The soul of man, which is a spiritual intelligent being, was immediately produc'd by God, out of nothing. *God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.* This metaphorical allusion, wherein God condescends to our weakness, shews, that the soul of man was not made by God out of any præ-existent matter, but was immediately from his creating power. God formed the body of man, by the intervention of second causes, which he employ'd; but he formed the soul by his own will and power, without the instrumentality of second causes. The various kinds of life in this world, were brought together in man, and therefore the word, which we translate, life, signifies, lives in the plural. *God breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives:* man had the

the life of vegetation, which is the life of trees, and plants, the life of sense, which is the life of birds and beasts, and he had the life of reason, which is the life of angels : he was a microcosm, or contraction of the greater world ; and was made the epitome of the invisible and visible creation : he was a composition of the upper and lower world ; he had the earth, in the dust of his body, and he had heaven, in the spiritual nature of his soul : he had the nether springs of the life of animals, in his sense, and the upper springs of the life of angels, in his reason : when he was a beautiful creature, as to his outward frame, it was his greatest excellence, that he was made after God's own image.

The doctrinal proposition which I shall raise from the words, is this ;

God made man in his own image :

In speaking to this truth, I shall do four things :

I. I shall shew, wherein the image of God consisted, wherein man was created.

II. I shall shew, what the happiness of man was by creation.

III. I shall shew, by what tenure he was possess'd of it, and how he was to hold it.

IV. I shall make some application.

I. *Of the image of God, wherein man was created.*

I shall shew, in the first place, wherein the image of God consisted, wherein man was created, and which was the glory of his innocence. Man was created with great excellency and comeliness in his body, but the image of God, wherein he was created, was the resemblance which he had of God in his soul.

I. Man was created with great excellency and comeliness in his body. When God framed the body of man, he erected it as a magnificent structure, or mansion-house, for his soul. The frame of man's body was wonderful and admirable. There was in the body of man a variety of members, with due proportion, and without any confusion; the members of his body were not more comely to the sight, than they were excellent for use. I shall instance in some of the members of his body. The eyes guided the motions of the body; the ears took in the distinction of sounds; the tongue express'd what the mind thought; the hands acted what the soul directed; the feet moved, and the limbs supported;

ported, the whole fabric of the body; the lungs cool'd the heart, which would else have been burnt up with heat; the heart was the spring of vital spirits, for the preservation of life; and the brain afforded animal spirits for motion. The proportion of the various members in man's body, was so exact, and all the members of his body were so useful, that there was great reason for the Psalmist to say, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* Psalm cxxxix. 14.

The frame of man's body was not only free from all irregularity, and had the greatest order in it, but it was no ways liable to distempers and diseases, which bring pain and death: the different humours, which were in it, were like a moderate mixture of heat and cold, which renders the air more refreshing and pleasant. It was besides created with so much strength and vigour, that every member could do what belonged to it, without the least trouble or difficulty. Exercise or labour brought no faintness and weariness to *Adam*, but was his delight: when he eat or drank, it was with pleasure, and not from pinching want: when he slept, it was not to repair what was lost, but to add to his comfort.

The comeliness of *Adam's* body was in no degree of it artificial and borrowed, but altogether from the symmetry of its parts. The beauty which men have now, is chiefly from their garments; and therefore the cloathing of

10 OF THE PRIMITIVE

of the lilies, because it is natural, is said to be better than that of *Solomon*. Matth. vi. 28, 29. *Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not array'd like one of these.* All *Solomon's* glory, when array'd in his imperial robes, was borrowed, and he was beholden to the creatures for it; but the lily wears its own cloathing. It was so with *Adam* and *Eve*: the beauty of their bodies was natural and inherent: this was their glory and excellence, and therefore *they knew not that they were naked*. Gen. ii. 25.

II. The image of God, wherein man was created, was the resemblance which he had of God, in his soul. The soul of man, as it was created a spiritual substance, had some likeness to God; but the spiritual substance of man's soul was not the image of God, wherein man was formed; for had it been so, the damned in hell would bear the image of God, because they retain their spiritual substance. The image of God, wherein man was created, was the conformity which was in the frame of his soul to God, and it consisted in two things, *viz.* Light or Knowledge, and Holiness.

1. The image of God, wherein man was created, consisted in light or knowledge. Col. iii. 10. *Put on the new man, which is renew'd in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.*

him. If a principal part of the new man which we are to put on, when we are born again, consists in knowledge, then knowledge was a primary part of the image of God, wherein man was created. The following thoughts may give us some view of man's knowledge by creation. It was implanted in him, and not acquired by a large circuit of laborious study; it was put into his soul, as pure water into a clean vessel: and it was capable of receiving increase; but it was sufficient to enable him, with skill and judgment, to read over the large volume of the creation: he was able to give fit names to the several sorts of creatures. Gen. ii. 29. *Whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.* He knew God in his works; he saw something of God in every creature: he knew God, not only by contemplating his works, but by revelation. The soul of man was neither dull in apprehension, nor defective in operation, and therefore he could receive, and improve, the discoveries which God made of himself to him: and he had a perfect knowledge of the law of God, which was the rule of his obedience. As he could read over the works of God, which declared his wisdom, goodness, and power; so he perfectly knew the law of God, which was the standard of his obedience: he had the law of God within him, and therefore his knowledge of it was by way

way of introspection, or looking into himself. That which *Moses* said to *Israel*, was true of man, in a comprehensive meaning and sense, *Deut. xxx. 24. The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it.*

2. The image of God, wherein man was created, consisted in holiness. *Eph. iv. 24. Put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.* Man was framed in a moral conformity to God, to obey his will, and to imitate him in his purity: he was indued with such integrity, in all his parts, as wholly disposed him to all operations which were conformable to God's will. There was a most orderly subjection of the lower faculties of man's soul, to the superior faculties of it: the will followed the dictates of his understanding, and his affections were regulated by the choice of his will; his affections, and all his inferior faculties, obeyed the motions of his will, and the rule of reason. When he had a judgment, to discern the difference between truth and error, good and evil, vice and virtue, he had a will to choose what was good, and to refuse what was evil: he had as much a free will to that which is good, as we have a free will to that which is evil. When he had a mind to contemplate the glorious perfections of God, he had a will to embrace him, as the sole author of his being, and of his happiness; he

had such a divine impression on his soul, as, with delight, carry'd his understanding, will, and affections to God as his chiefest good.

The whole frame of man's soul was free from every imperfection, spot, and blemish : there was light, without darkness, in his mind ; a propensity to obey, without reluctance, in his will ; and purity, without defilement, in his affections. The clearness of the stream, which was in man, pointed to the infinite purity which was in God ; and the brightness of the image, evidenced the superlative splendour in the original.

II. *Of the created happiness of man.*

Having shew'd wherein the image of God, wherein man was created, consisted ; I shall now shew, what the created happiness of man was : His created happiness was great.

I. He was God's viceroy, or governor of the lower creation. Gen. i. 28. *God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it : and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* Man was invested with a dominion over all the creatures in this lower world : all the creatures were subject to him : it was no difficulty for him to govern the creatures, and there was no backwardness in them to obey

obey and serve him: and he had power to dispose of every creature for his comfort. Man was made the center of all the creatures goodness; for to him, as their lord, they paid the tribute of their comfort. As man was made for the honour of God, so the world was made for the delight of man: God crown'd the earth with his goodness, to gratify man, and gave him a right to serve himself, of all the creatures which he had made: there was not a desire could rise up in man, but there was something or other in the world, to be found, to satisfy it; and there was not a creature in the universe, in which he might not find something to please him.

II. When he bore God's image, which was his greatest beauty, he enjoy'd God's love, which was the perfection of his happiness. God imprinted on him his likeness, that he might have communion with him, and be happy in the enjoyment of his favour: the lively sense which he had of God's love crown'd all his other delights, and brought into his soul a stream of pure, unmixed joy.

III. The created happiness of man would have been perpetual, endless, and without the least interruption, if he had stood: he would have always been continued in a blessed state.

It may be asked, whether man, if he had stood, was to have been translated or taken to heaven? I answer; It is a general opinion,

nion, among Divines, that he would; but if it be narrowly examined, it will be found groundless. The felicity of man, by creation, was limited to this lower world: he could not merit heaven, by his perfect obedience, because there was no proportion between his service and such a reward: all that he could expect was a natural, and not a supernatural happiness. Besides, a promise of the glory of heaven was not imply'd in the threatening of eternal death; because eternal death, upon man's sinning, was deserved by him: sin render'd him the object of God's severest hatred, but his obedience could not render him worthy of God's highest favour. It could not be expected from God's goodness, to elevate man to the supernatural happiness of heaven. When God created man, it was necessary, in regard of his infinite wisdom, to create him for a proper end; but it was not necessary that he should create him for the highest end, which is the supernatural happiness of heaven.

It may be said, How could man, if he had stood, have been satisfy'd without the beatific vision of God in heaven? I answer; If he had stood, he could not have bore the beatific vision of God in heaven, without first undergoing a change: he had not a fitness for heaven; his soul was a spirit, but his body was earthly; and as it was earthly, it had not a strength to bear the heavenly glory: neither,

neither, had he stood, could he have desired the beatific vision of God in heaven, without being guilty of inordinacy. It would be sinful presumption for the angels in heaven, to desire higher degrees of glory than God has allotted for them.

III. *Of the covenant of works.*

I shall now proceed to shew, by what tenure man was possess'd of his created happiness, and how he was to hold it: it was by the law of the covenant of works, that he was possess'd of his created happiness, and by his obedience to this law he was to hold it: his life was to continue as long as his obedience, and his happiness was to endure as long as his integrity. I shall here shew, how the covenant of works was made with man; what the terms of the covenant of works were, on God's part, and on man's side; and how easy and reasonable the terms, or conditions were, which God required of man in the covenant of works.

I. I shall shew how the covenant of works was made with man: it was made with him, as the head and representative of all mankind. When the covenant of works was made with man, he was then bound, not only to perform all the conditions of it for himself, but for his posterity, because it was made with him, as he was the head and representative

presentative of all men, and as the whole rational nature was in him, as its root and fountain. The covenant of works was made with the first man, and with us in him: This is evident from what is said of our dying in him. 1 Cor. xv. 22. *In Adam all die.* The dying of all in *Adam*, proves the sinning of all in *Adam*: we could not have died in *Adam*, if we had not first sin'd in *Adam*; and we could not have sin'd in him, if the covenant of works had not been made with us in him, and if we had not been included in it as a covenant-party.

II. I shall shew what the terms of the covenant of works were on God's part, and on man's side.

1. I shall shew what the terms of the covenant of works were on God's part. The covenant of works had terms on God's part. God had a sovereign legislative power, to lay man, as he was his creature, under a covenant engagement, and to prescribe to him what terms of obedience he thought fit. God exerted this sovereign legislative power over man, when he had made him: when he had given him a soul, that he might live as a rational creature, he gave him a law, that he might live as a dutiful subject. When God gave man this law, he laid himself under a covenant engagement, to be man's God and portion, to afford him the enjoyment of his favour and image, to protect him in his royalty and do-

18 OF THE PRIMITIVE

minion over the creatures, and to maintain both him and his seed, in a state of happiness if he stood.

2. I shall shew what the terms of the covenant of works were, on man's side.

(1.) Man was to offer up a perfect obedience to the law of God. He was to seek righteousness, by his pure and spotless obedience to the law of God. Do this and live, was the strain of the covenant of works. *Levit. xviii. 5.* *You shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them.* The words of God by *Moses* are repeated. *Ezek xx. 11.* *Rom. x. 5.* *Gal. iii. 12.*

Man was not only to obey the particular command of God, in not eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, but he was to obey the whole law of God, in every precept of it. In the covenant of works all duties were commanded, and all sins were forbid. The law of the covenant of works required all that man could do in the exercise of his created power, in a way of universal obedience. *Deut. vi. 5.* *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* This commandment, which was to be the measure of the first man's obedience, is repeated by three evangelists. *Matth. xxii. 37.* *Mark xii. 30.* *Luke x. 27.* This commandment shews what we ought to do, and what the first man was bound to do, and was able to do. He was to love the

Lord with all his heart: the heart signifies the understanding, will, and affections. All the faculties of man's soul were to be employ'd, in putting forth acts of supreme love to God: his thoughts and affections were not to wander from God; a vain thought or a desire unduly carried out, was a violation of the law of the covenant of works. As soon as the woman cast her eye upon the forbidden fruit, to desire it, she broke the law of the covenant of works. Man was also to love the Lord with all his soul: by soul may be meant the sensitive appetite, which was in man: he was to love God in the creatures, but he was to love him above and beyond them: he was to love other things for God, but he was to love God for himself. He was, farther, to love God with all his might, or with all his mind, as we have it in the evangelists. The whole strength and vehemence of his soul was to go out after God.

(2.) Man's obedience to the law of God was not only to be perfect, but it was to be perpetual: he was to obey the law in the perfection of it, and he was to obey it always. If he had obey'd the law many years, and then had come under any defect in his obedience, his former obedience could not have secured the standing of him and his seed. There was a necessity for the perpetuity of his obedience, as well as for the perfection of it, to secure the standing of him, and of them whom he represented.

(3.) The perfect and perpetual obedience of the first man to the law of God, was injoin'd and enforc'd by a sanction. If the first man had stood, he and his posterity would always have been happy, but he and they in him were threatened with death, if he sin'd. The covenant of works left no place for repentance: upon the least degree of disobedience, the curse took place, and all the promised blessings were forfeited. Gen. ii. 17. *Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* There are two questions which I shall here answer, for our getting a right understanding of this Scripture.

[1.] Why was not the promise of life, upon the condition of man's perfect and perpetual obedience, express'd, as well as the threatening of death, upon his breaking the law of God? To this I answer: The reason why the threatening of death only, in case of disobedience, and not the promise of life, upon the condition of perfect and perpetual obedience, was express'd, was this; the first man had the expectation of happiness in the endless duration of it, if he stood, from the image of God, which he beheld in himself, from the large provision which God had made for him, in this lower world, from the command given him, to increase and multiply, and from the commission which he had to rule over all God's other works, in the visible creation; but

but he could not easily have imagined himself exposed to the most dismal calamity of eternal death for sin, without some express signification of it from God.

[2.] What death was it that was here threatened? To this I answer: In the general; the death threatened, comprehended in it all evils, which were contrary to man's created happiness: but in particular; it was the death of the soul, which was threatened. The death of the body was a consequent fruit of the death express'd in the threatening; but it was not the death which was intended in the commination. If the death of the body had been the death threatened in case of disobedience, then the man and woman would have come under a temporal death, as soon as they sin'd: They would have died the very day they fell. It is farther to be observed, that the punishment of the death of the body, was not pronounced till after the fall. Gen. iii. 29. *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.*

It was the death of the soul, or a spiritual eternal death that was threatened: It was a spiritual death in sin; this was the separation of man's soul from God, the loss of his favour, and of his image. *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* It is as if God had said thus, In the day thou transgressest my law, thou shalt be deprived of my favour and image; thou shalt lose thy pure nature, thy inherent beauty, and thy noble

frame. This spiritual death has join'd to it a death of eternal punishment. When the first man sin'd, he lost the favour and image of God, and all the privileges of creation, for himself, and his posterity; and both he and they came under the desert of eternal punishment.

III. I shall shew how easy and reasonable the conditions were, which God required of man, in the covenant of works: They were so easy and reasonable, that God, in requiring them, manifested abundant grace and goodness towards man. This may be proved by four things.

1. The particular obedience required of man, for his trial, was most easy: it was so easy, that it was next to nothing. Man himself could not have desired a more easy condition than it was: The command was negative, and not positive: it was not a command to act, but a command not to act. Man was not required to do any thing, but only commanded to forbear to take the fruit of the forbidden tree: It was more work for him to break the command, than to observe it.

2. Man's obedience to the whole law of the covenant of works, was most easy. It was so for three reasons.

(1.) The law which he was to obey, was written upon his heart. That the law which man was to obey was written upon his heart, may be proved from the Apostle's words.

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Rom. ii. 14, 15. *When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shews the work of the law written in their hearts.* The Gentiles had not the law, as it was written upon tables of stone, and given to *Israel* at mount *Sinai*; but when they had not the law, which was written upon tables of stone, they did many things, which were contained in the law. The reason why the Gentiles did many things, which were contained in the law, was, because the law was written upon their hearts. God preserved several grand points of the law of creation, in the conscience of all men, in their fallen state, for the restraint of their innate corruptions, and that government and civil society, in this world, might be practicable and not impossible. The Gentiles had the law printed on their hearts, when it was not published to their ears.

It may be said, when was it that the law was inscribed on the heart? I answer, not after the fall, but before the fall. There is something of the law of creation, in the hearts of all unregenerate men; but the inscription of the law upon the heart, was in the state of innocence. There was a perfect transcript of the law of God upon man's heart, before the fall: This made a perfect and perpetual obedience to the law as natural to him, as the sin of breaking the law is natural to us: When he obey'd the law, he

24 OF THE PRIMITIVE

only did what was written upon his heart, and acted according to the strong propensity, which was natural to him.

(2.) Man had not only a power to obey the law of God, and a will to delight in it, but the law which was given him, for his rule, was not below his strength, and the sanction of the law, which threatened him with death, upon his disobedience, was more than sufficient to restrain him from the violation of it: When he had power to conform to the law, and the strongest arguments to move him to obey it, he had no inbred inclinations to warp from it; and he knew that his ruin would be inevitable, if he broke the law. The whole nature of man was entirely suited to the righteousness of the law of God, in all the precepts of it, and therefore it was most agreeable to his will to obey them. When all the duties commanded in the law became the authority of God, as a sovereign to enjoin, and the goodness of God, as a father to demand, they became the ingenuity of a perfect rational creature, and of a son, to perform. It was the greatest pleasure and delight to man, in his created state, to observe the law of God, and to continue in his obedience to it: It was more easy for him to determine his will to love God, as his supreme good, and to move towards him as his last end, than it was to depart from him: The rectitude of his nature was such, that it was more easy for him to have kept his eye fixed on the divine beauty, than to have turned his back upon it.

(3.) The

(3.) The law of God was for the happiness of man, and therefore it was in every respect congruous to the care, which he ought to have had for his own welfare. The happiness of man was to be the end of his obedience to the law. God not only asserted his own authority, in the law, but he promoted man's felicity. The design of the law when given was, that man might have life, if he obey'd it : if man had not broke, but kept the law, then the words of God concerning the revolting *Israelites*, would have been verified of him, to the utmost. Psal. lxxxii. 15, 16. *Their time should have endured for ever : he should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat ; and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.*

If the law of the covenant of works, which man was to obey, was written in his heart, if he had not only a power to obey it, but a will to delight in his obedience to it, and if his happiness was the end of his obedience to the law ; then it was most easy for man to obey the whole law, which God gave to be his rule.

3. All the strength which man had, to perform the conditions of the covenant of works, was from the free gift of God. Man was only to persist in the exercise of that grace which he had, but he was not commanded to acquire for himself any other grace, than what he had received : This made his obedience most easy. Man had nothing, but what came to him from the

24 OF THE PRIMITIVE

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3. All the strength which man had, to perform the conditions of the covenant of works, was from the free gift of God. Man was only to persist in the exercise of that grace which he had, but he was not commanded to acquire for himself any other grace, than what he had received : This made his obedience most easy. Man had nothing, but what came to him from the

the gift of God: The strength which he had, to persevere in a perfect obedience to the law of God, was by gift or grace; and therefore if he had stood, he would have been saved by grace, in a covenant of works.

4. It was grace in God to promise a reward to man's perfect obedience, if he had stood. Man's perfect obedience to the law was most justly due to God, because it was founded in his nature, and because God had furnish'd him with strength, for a perfect obedience; but it was grace in God, to promise a perpetual blessedness to man, upon the condition of his obedience; because he could give nothing to God, but what he had first received, as a free gift from him. Man could claim happiness as the reward of his perfect obedience, only by way of stipulation, but not in a way of justice: The perfect obedience of man, if he had stood, could not have merited a perpetuity of happiness, by its own worth, but only by a federal compact or covenant agreement: His perfect obedience had federal merit in it, but no merit resulting from its own worth. The conditions of the covenant of works, which were to be performed, on man's side, were founded on the rules of justice and truth; but it was of grace for God to promise happiness to man, upon the account of his obedience.

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IV. The APPLICATION.

I shall now make some improvement of what hath been said.

I. If God made man, in his own image, to bear a conformity to himself, in a clear light, and in a perfection of holiness; then it must be said, that man was a most beautiful creature, as he was formed by God: And if man by creation, was possess'd of happiness, as he had the favour of God, bore his image, and had a superiority or empire over all the creatures, in the lower world; then God acted immense and sovereign goodness towards man, in the state of creation. No reason can be given, why man was made the head, and not the foot of the visible creation, but only the sovereign goodness of God: it was pure goodness in God, to make man a more excellent creature, and for higher ends, than he did any other creatures in the material world.

II. If the conditions of the covenant of works were every way suitable to the righteous nature of man by creation; if he had both a power and a will to perform them, with delight, and if the end of his perfect obedience, to the law of God, was his happiness; then it was as great a privilege and freedom, for man to be under the covenant of works, in his created state, as it is a burden and bondage for us to be under it, **in our lapsed condition.** It was no hardship

ship for man to be bound, perfectly to obey the law of God, because he had a perfection of strength to do it; but for us, in our fallen state, to be ty'd to perfect obedience to the law of God, when we have no strength at all, is a yoke of insupportable servitude. It was more easy, without comparison, for man, in his created state, perfectly to obey the whole law of God, than it is for us, while we are in our fallen state, to think one good thought, because we have not a sufficiency to do this in our selves.

III. If all the strength which man had, to perform the conditions of the covenant of works, came to him from God, by way of free gift, then for any to say, that the covenant of grace has conditions, to be perform'd by us, antecedently to our receiving the promised benefits of it, is to turn the covenant of grace into a covenant of works, and that into a covenant of works, far inferior in goodness to the covenant of works, under which man was created. Man had both a power to obey the law of the covenant of works, and a will to do it with delight, but in our fallen state, we have neither a power, nor a will, to do any thing which is spiritually good: We are not barely without a power, to do what the law of God commands, but we are fill'd with enmity against the law.

It may be said, it is by grace that we perform the conditions of the new covenant: To this

it may be replied; The first man had a perfection of grace, without the least weakness, to strengthen him to perform the conditions of the covenant of works; but the grace which believers have, in their present state, is not only imperfect, but it meets with great opposition from their indwelling corruptions. If this be so, then the covenant of works, which the first man was under, was much better, than some would make the covenant to be, which believers are now under; would it not be more eligible to have perfect grace for perfect obedience, than to have imperfect grace, clog'd with many strong corruptions, for sincere obedience, to secure to us the friendship of God?

They who assert, that the covenant of grace has conditions, to be antecedently performed by us, for our receiving the blessings promised in it, represent the covenant of grace to be a covenant which is altogether unsuitable to us in our fallen state, and is most reproachful to the infinite wisdom of God. Can any who are solicitous for the honour of God's infinite wisdom, ever imagine, that the blessed and infinitely wise God, suffer'd the first covenant to be broke, to make way for another, which is so far from exceeding it in glory, that it vastly falls short of it in goodness? This is not to be thought: it is to darken the infinite wisdom of God in his contrivance of our redemption, by that covenant of grace, made with Christ the second *Adam*, and with all his seed in him.

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OF THE
F A L L o f M A N.



ECCLES. vii. 29.

*Lo, this only have I found, that God
made man upright; but they have
sought out many inventions.*



HEN we do not review the happiness of our state by creation, we neither know the good we have lost, nor the evil we have brought upon our selves by sin: As we know not our present poverty, when we know nothing of our former riches; so when we do not believe our selves to be miserable, we make no enquiries after a Savior, and we have no desires to be happy. When

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we are insensible of the deplorableness of our fallen state, we continue in it, without any care to get out of it, and we do not seek for relief and recovery through Christ. The only physician of our souls will not be prized by us, when we feel nothing of our disease, because they who imagine themselves to be whole, and that they were never sick, do with great confidence think, they have no need of healing. The fall is the immediate cause of all our misery, but a sense of it is the first step to all our happiness: We never begin to look to Christ for righteousness and life, till we first look back to our fall in *Adam*, whereby we came under the reign of sin and death.

Having given some account of our happy state by creation, I shall endeavour to lay open the greatness of our loss by the fall.

Solomon, the son of *David*, for valid reasons, is generally thought to be the author of the book of *Ecclesiastes*: It may be said of him, if all things be considered, that no man (the first man only excepted) ever forgot himself so much as he did. When he was the wisest man, by falling into several heinous sins, he acted the part of the greatest fool: When he was come to himself, had seen his folly, and had repented of his sins, he made this book, as a penitential sermon, and left it upon record, that he might give glory to God, by the free and open confession of his sins; and that he might, as one who had ex-

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perimentally smarted, for giving way to the bewitching vanities of this world, warn others to avoid the snares wherein he had been intangled, and persuade them to seek for a compleat satisfaction, and for eternal rest only in God. *Solomon* having apply'd himself to find out true wisdom, and the wickedness of folly, declares Chap. vii. 23, 24. what was the result of his diligent search. He found it to be very difficult to attain to true wisdom. Ver. 24. *That which is afar off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?* But, at the same time, he found the wickedness of mankind to be far beyond his comprehension. He proves this, by the wickedness of the weaker sex, and by the wickedness of the harlot, which is the worst of the sex, ver. 26, 27, 28. and by the wickedness of both sexes. Neither the man nor the woman are as God made them, but have warp'd from their created rectitude; as we have it in the words of the text. *Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.* The fall of man was a discovery which *Solomon* made, with great certainty. He speaks as if, in his inquiries about other things, he had proceeded with many doubts and with great difficulty; but in this he was left at no uncertainty, but knew he had found out what he sought after. *Lo, this only have I found.* The present state of all men is a wicked, per-

verse, wretched state: *Solomon* here traces it up to its root and spring, which is the fall. There are two things in the words.

I. Man was created in a state of perfection. *God made man upright.* He created him with wisdom, which was the rectitude of his mind; and with purity, which was the rectitude of his will and affections. Man was made with light in his understanding, holiness in his will, and a most exact order or regularity in his affections: There was such a perfect harmony between the members of his body, and the faculties of his soul, that all the members of his body were subject to his affections, his affections were subject to his will, his will was guided by his reason, and his reason was govern'd by the law of God.

II. Man, by sinning against God, fell from his created integrity. *God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.* It may be observed, that when the fall is spoke of, the number is varied from the singular to the plural: It may be supposed that this was done, either, because the man and woman were confederates in their apostacy from God; they acted conjunctly, when they of their own accord sought out many inventions; God created them in a righteous state, but by their voluntary sinning against God, they threw themselves into a most forlorn condition. Or it is because all men and women, that ever were or shall be in this world, were in the loins of the first

first man, and therefore are said to be actors in that sin which brought the fall: We were all in the first man and woman, and as we were in them, we sought out many inventions.

The many inventions which the man and woman, and we in them, sought out, are all the counsels, contrivances, devices, and false reasonings, which have been made use of in all ages, since the fall, to excuse, defend, and practise every evil course, and method of wickedness.

The first invention which the man and woman sought out, was this; they rested not in the way and means of happiness, which God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, had laid out for them; but they aspired after a greater happiness: They were for getting more than God had given them, and so they lost all they had. This was the first invention which the man and woman sought out, and since the fall, the best of all the inventions, sought out by their degenerate posterity, has been to regain what they lost, by choosing that which has some shadow, or appearance of good, but is really evil. The inventions which the apostate race of the first man and woman have sought out, are the numberless shifts, whereby they seek to justify their departure from God, to conceal, or to palliate their sins, and to pacify and silence their clamorous guilty conscience.

It is from the latter part of the verse, that I shall raise this doctrine or observation ;

Man by sinning against God, fell from his integrity and lost his created righteousness.

In speaking to this doctrinal proposition, I shall do four things.

I. I shall shew, how the man and woman, who were created in a state of perfection, came to sin against God, and so to fall from their created righteousness.

II. I shall set out the greatness of that sin, which brought the fall.

III. I shall shew, what the misery is which came upon the man and woman, and all their offspring, as the fruit and desert of sin,

IV. I shall offer some considerations, to vindicate the holiness, justice, and equity of God, in the punishment which he inflicts for the first man's sin.

I. *How Man came to fall.*

I shall shew how the man and woman, who were created in a state of perfection, came to sin against God, and so to fall from their created

ated righteousness. It was from the Devil, as a tempter, and from their own consenting and yielding to the Devil's temptations.

I. It was from the Devil, as a tempter, that the first man and woman were entic'd to sin against God, and so fell from their created state. We have the history of the Devil's tempting the woman, *Gen. iii. 1—5.* and we may take the following view of it. The Devil, it is certain, acted in and by the serpent. It is thought that the serpent, by creation, was a creature of great beauty and comeliness, and therefore was chose by the Devil, as a fit engine to work by. The serpent applied himself to the woman when she was alone: He knew there was such a strict union, and bond of amity, between the man and woman, that if he seduc'd the one, he could easily overcome the other: He made his attempt upon the woman, when she was alone, that she might have no assistance from the man, to repel the first temptation. The serpent, when he address'd himself to the woman, brought into question the truth of God's command, and endeavour'd to overthrow the design of the precept, by drawing the woman to doubt of it. ver. 1. *Yea, has God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* it is as if the serpent had said, can it be thought, that God, who is so liberal and munificent, would forbid you to eat of the pleasant fruit of any tree of the garden? When the woman reply'd that it was

only of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, that they were not to eat, the serpent proceeded more boldly in his temptations, and charged God with falsehood and envy. ver. 4, 5. *The serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die: for God knoweth that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* The serpent gave a bold and flat contradiction to the express word of God; he deny'd the truth of what God had said: God had said, *ye shall surely die:* The serpent said, *ye shall not surely die.* The serpent also maliciously traduc'd God, and charg'd him with envy. *God knows, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened.* The serpent taxed God with selfishness and envy, as if the only reason, why God had prohibited the man and woman to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, was, lest they should make their condition better than it was. The serpent promised, that the man and woman, by eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, should grow up from reasonable creatures, to be like God himself. *Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.*

II. It was from a voluntary consenting and yielding to the Devil's temptations, that the man and woman sinned against God, and so lost their created righteousness. As God gave them integrity, so he gave them power to abide in it as long as they would. *When God had*

had furnish'd them with power to act righteously, it was agreeable to his infinite wisdom, to give them a liberty of choice, and not to fix them in their unchangeable state, without a tryal of them: As they were mutable creatures, they were from God; but as they became depraved creatures, it was from their own sin, in hearkening to the temptations of the serpent.

There were several gradations in the sin which brought the fall. It was a sin in the woman, to entertain a discourse with the serpent, which tended to bring the truth of God's command into question: It was a greater sin, for the woman to add to the word of God, and at the same time to detract from it. Gen. iii. 8. *Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.* In this she added to the word of God; because we do not read that God forbid them to touch it. And when she added to the word of God, she detracted, or took from it, what was most material, *lest ye die.* God said, *ye shall surely die;* but when the woman should have stuck to the threatening of God, in its full force and latitude, she diminish'd and took from it, and said, *lest ye die.* When she was brought to detract from God's threatening, she began to waver about the truth of it; and when she began to waver about the truth of God's threatening, she was prepar'd to break God's command. Farther, it was a most black, aggravated sin, for the woman

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first to hear, and then to believe the serpent, when he charged God with falsehood and envy. She not only believ'd the serpent before God, but gave credit to the serpent when he brought the most blasphemous accusation, against the truth, faithfulness, and goodness of God. In short, when the woman believ'd the serpent, when he charg'd God with falsehood and envy, her sin was brought to its highest pitch, and she gave the finishing stroke to the ruin of mankind, by eating the forbidden fruit. *Gen. iii. 6.*

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat.

When the woman look'd upon the forbidden fruit, to lust after it, she proceeded from lust-ing after it, to take of it; and when she had taken of it, she both eat of it her self, and gave of it to her husband, who also eat of it with her. When the woman gave the man the forbidden fruit to eat, there is no doubt, but she propounded to him the reasons which moved her to eat of it, and the advantage which she expected.

The first spring of the sin of our first parents, was a suspension of the motion of their souls towards God; and when the motion of their souls towards God was suspended, it presently degenerated into a motion towards the sin of unbelief and pride. They did not believe the truth of God's threatening, but they believed

what the serpent said, in contradiction to it, *ye shall not surely die*: and at the same time they ambitiously affected to be equal with God, and to have no more a dependence on him. *Ye shall be as Gods.*

There are two questions which may here be ask'd;

I. What did the woman think the serpent to be, when she held a discourse with him? We answer, the woman could not think the serpent to be either a brute, or a good angel, or a bad angel: not a brute, because when she had a clear and distinct knowledge of the nature and quality of brute animals, she could not think that a brute could speak, reason, and argue about the truth or falsehood of things. To say, that she thought a brute could speak, argue, and debate about things, would be to make her more ignorant before the fall, than she was after it. She could not imagine the serpent to be a good angel, because she could not but know, that it was contrary to the disposition of a good spirit, to raise a dispute about the authority, truth, and goodness of God's command. Nor did she apprehend him to be a bad angel; because when she was not tainted in her created purity, she could not be willing to entertain a conference with a fallen angel, who had openly rebell'd against God. Therefore the most probable account seems to be, the woman might think the serpent to be a creature that had bettered its condition, from what it was by creation, and was raised from the

the rank of a brute, to the species of a rational creature.

II. By what artifice or flight did the serpent deceive the man and woman, when they were perfect, intelligent creatures? I answer, it was by subtilty, that the serpent seduc'd the woman, and then the man by the woman, in representing that to be good, which God said was evil, and that to be evil which God said was good. 2 Cor. xi. 3. *The serpent beguil'd Eve through his subtilty.*

It was by subtilty that the serpent beguil'd the man and woman, but still the question returns, and it may be said, what was the subtilty, or flight, whereby the serpent fasten'd the greatest fallacy upon their understandings? To this intricate question I answer, it is probable the serpent deceived them, by saying, that by eating of the forbidden fruit, he was advanc'd from being a brute, to be a rational creature: By this artifice the force of the threatening was evaded. I have eaten of this fruit (might the serpent say) and yet death has not taken hold of me, and therefore there can be no danger to you, if you eat of it. By this flight they were drawn to expect equality with God. The serpent might argue and say, if the fruit of the tree have such a transforming virtue in it, to make a brute, as I was, become a rational creature, what wonderful change will it not make in you, who are already reasonable creatures? If it has so elevated my state, that of a

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brute I am become rational, it will certainly make you, if you eat of it, who have reason, to be equal to God in knowledge and all other perfections. This might be the way, which the Devil took, to gild over the most deadly poison, of which he persuaded the first man and woman to eat: It was by this subtilty, that he drew them to embrace the greatest evil, under the notion of good, and to eat mortality and misery.

When we reflect on the way which the Devil took to beguile our first parents, and how forward they were to comply with his temptations, we may learn four things.

1. It is most dangerous, once to give ear to the Devil's temptations. If the woman had held no conference with the serpent, and had been deaf to his crafty insinuations, she would not have been intangled and deceived by him. When we hear what the Devil says, we are in a ready way to do as he bids us. We are commanded to resist the Devil. Jam. iv. 7. *resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.* If we resist him when he tempts us, we shall get the conquest over him; but if we enter into a parley with him, we shall be overcome by him.

2. When the Devil, only in a slanting remote way and manner, arraigns the truth of God, if we do not oppose his first attempt, with stedfastness and vigour, he will rise much higher in his next charge. When he dealt with the woman,

woman, he begun with a cavilling question ; *Yea, has God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ?* when he found that his question was not rejected with detestation, he run as high, as a direct contradiction to the truth of God's word : *ye shall not surely die.*

3. It is great impiety, and tends to *Atheism*, for us to hear the truths of God question'd and deny'd. The woman by letting the serpent first question, and then deny, the truth of God's threatening, fell from her integrity. Curious questions, and unnecessary ratiocinations, destroy the souls of many. If we will hear, and answer, all that the Devil and his emissaries have to say, by queries, objections, and arguments, we may soon reason our selves out of all faith, into downright infidelity.

4. We ought to be afraid of the temptations of the Devil, and our fear of them must make us pray to Christ, for strength to resist them. The Devil overcame the man and woman, in a state of innocence, when there was not the least corruption in them, whercon he could graft his temptations ; if he did this, what may he not do against us, in whom he finds a depraved nature, as much prepar'd to receive his temptations, as the dry flax is to catch the burning fire, if we do not stand in Christ's strength, and have not on the whole armour of God ?

II. Of the greatness of the sin that brought the fall.

I shall now set out the greatness of that sin which brought the fall. We must not look only at the external act of taking and eating the forbidden fruit, but also at the circumstances of it, and then we shall find it to be a most aggravated sin.

I. The sin which brought the fall, was the root and spring of all other sins, which have been since in the world. It was the mother sin which conceived, and brought forth all the sins which have filled the world, for above five thousand years ; it was the seed or principle of them all. The evil of the first sin is not to be measured, by what it was only in it self, but by all the wickedness which it has produced. It was no less than, seminally, all the sins both great and small, which have been acted in the world, ever since the time of *Adam*'s apostacy.

II. The sin which brought the fall, was the sin not only of *Adam*, individually and personally considered, but it was the sin of *Adam* as he was the common head and representative of all men. We all sinned in *Adam*, representatively : it is for this reason, that the sin of *Adam* was as great, as if all the thousands and millions of men and women that sprung from him, had then been in being, and had personally and actually sinned with him.

III. The

III. The sin which brought the fall, was a transgression of the whole law of God, and every other sin was in it. All sins were in the first sin: I shall instance in several. There was in it unbelief; this was the radical cause of the apostacy, or defection, of the first man and woman from God. It was an evil heart of unbelief in them, which gave birth to their turning aside from God; the sin of unbelief begun their departure from the living God, and it is the cause of our apostacy from him. *Heb. iii. 12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* It was an evil heart of unbelief that drew them away from God. If they had not first disbelieved God's threatening, they would not have broke his command; if they had not doubted the truth of God's word, they would not have assented to the falsehoods of the serpent: when they suspected the truth of God's word, and believed what the serpent said, they cast contempt on the glorious perfections of God; they impeach'd his wisdom, and accused it of imperfection, in thinking a different state more eligible, than that wherein they were. They aspers'd the goodness of God, and reproach'd him with the charge of envy, as if he had restrain'd them from something which would bring them into a better condition; they denied his power, in seeking to advance themselves without his help; they denied his infinite

nite knowledge, as well as his truth, in not believing what he had said, concerning the forbidden fruit ; they disparag'd his holiness, as they thought the prohibition, which he had laid them under, was unjust.

As unbelief was the cause of the first sin, so it was big with all manner of evils ; such as swelling pride, presumption, and discontent : for the man and woman desired to be equal to God, and sought a more exalted state, than that wherin they were created. Idolatry ; when God was their omnipotent Creator, they expected nobler gifts from the creatures, and from ways of their own devising, than they had received from him. Covetousness and inordinacy ; when they had more than enough, yet they coveted the forbidden fruit, which brought the loss of all ; when their portion was large and liberal, they were not satisfied with it, but inordinately desired the forbidden fruit : When God had given them all the creatures in this world, as well as all the fruit of the trees in paradise, for their use, and had only excepted the fruit of the tree of knowledge, yet, without this, all other things could not content them. This was not all, for in their sin were found, deceit and theft ; they were thieves and robbers, as they put forth their sacrilegious hands to take away that which God appointed to stand, and to be the test of their subjection and allegiance. There was murder ; next to the murder of the son of God,

Adam's sin was the greatest murder that ever was in the world; he murder'd all his posterity, as he brought death upon them. There was the foulest ingratitude; God gave the man and woman immortal souls, lifted them far above all the other creatures, and admitted them into communion with himself; but they had no tender regard for his honour, no fear of his greatness, no reverence for his authority, no respect for his word, and no thankfulness for his benefits. As soon as the serpent tempted them, they, without any long refusal, or resolute defence, broke the command of God: The fallacious reasonings of the serpent, were more prevalent, to persuade them to break the law of God, than the innumerable expressions of God's plenteous liberality were, to incite him to keep it. The first sin was an open rebellion against God: God had forewarn'd *Adam*, and had expressly told him what he was to expect, if he broke the law, which was his rule; but this deter'd him not from the violation of God's law, and by the breach of it he bid defiance to his Maker. This was accompanied with a denial of God's sovereignty: God, by forbidding man to eat of the tree of knowledge, declared his sovereignty and supremacy over him; he let him know that he was not his own lord, and was not to fulfil his own will, but to live according to the directions of his supreme Lawgiver and Governor. God gave him matter for pure obedience, which had no foundation

foundation in the law of creation, further than the creature, by the law of creation, is bound to obey the will of the Creator in all things.

Adam's first sin was a most contemptuous denial of God's sovereignty over him. There was also, in the first sin, in all probability, a breach of the sabbath: The man and woman were created the day before the sabbath; the next day after they were created, they were to enter upon the solemn service of God, and to celebrate his power, wisdom and goodness, which were visible in the works of creation: it is thought, that towards the evening of the sabbath day, the man and woman fell; if this was so, the sin of sabbath-breaking was added to all their other sins.

IV. The sin which brought the fall, as it had all other sins complicated in it, so it was a sin done against the clearest light of knowledge. The man and woman sinned, when they had a light, which was sufficient to shew them the evil of transgressing the law of God, and a created power, which made it most easy for them to avoid every sin, and to obey the whole commanding will of God. *Adam* and *Eve* saw so much of the holiness of God, and of the righteousness of the law, that they sinned against God, when they had the brightest beams of light witnessing against them. They sin'd not through ignorance, but against a light which gave them a perfect knowledge of their duty: they did not fall, because they knew not

the rule which they were to walk by, but because they did not observe it, when they had a clear knowledge of it. It was a fearful aggravation of man's sin that he transgress'd the law of God, when he had a shining light to direct and guide him.

The sin which brought the fall, was a sin of the highest aggravations. What incredulity was it in man, not only to doubt the truth of God's command, but to accuse his Creator of malice and envy? What pride was it in him, to covet equality with God? What idolatry was it in him, to expect more from the shallow streams of the creatures, than from the inexhaustible fountain of God's infinite goodness? What covetousness and inordinacy was it in him, not to forbear the fruit of one tree, when he had the greatest plenty and variety for his delight? What sacrilege was it in him, to steal away that which was to be the standing proof of his allegiance to God? What defect of charity was it in him, to murder his posterity, to enslave them to Satan, and to entail the worst malediction on them? What ingratitude was it in him, to substitute a reprobate spirit in the place of God? What insufferable contempt and insolence was it in him, to rise up against his supreme Lawgiver and Governor, and to deny his sovereignty over him? What a perverting of the design of the sabbath was it in him, to hearken to the circumventing discourse of the serpent, when he should have
been

been contemplating the glory of his Creator, and praising him for his wonderful works? What inexcusable and strange inadvertence was it in him, to know his happiness, and yet to turn his back upon it; to see his danger, and yet to fall into it?

III. *Of the misery that came upon all mankind by the fall.*

Having shew'd how man came to sin, and set forth the greatness of the first sin, I shall now shew, what the misery is, which came upon the first man and woman, and all their posterity, as the fruit and desert of sin. It is the greatest misery which the sin of our first parents brought upon them, and also upon us. We may consider it in four things:

1. The first man's sin brought a general disorder into the whole visible creation. Man, by sin, turned the world upside down, brought a new chaos upon the whole creation, and involved it in universal confusion. Instead of a perpetual spring, which would have commenced every day, if man had stood, we are either pinch'd with the rigours of a freezing winter, or are consum'd with the suffocating heat of a parching summer: instead of the mild air and refreshing gales, and the cool, pleasant, purling streams which were in paradise, there are now stormy winds and tempests, that throw down, and turn into heaps of rubbish, the

strongest and most stately palaces, and floods that drown villages, and waste and destroy whole provinces: instead of the smiling flowers, the cooling shades, and the goodly arboars, which were among the groves of *Eden*, we too often behold gibbets, wheels, racks, axes, halters, swords, and other engines and instruments of cruelty and barbarity: instead of the abundance and variety of delicious fruit, which was in the garden of God, to afford the highest satisfaction to man's regular appetite, the face of the earth is now covered with wrinkles and scars, every place is fill'd with sterility, there is frequently a scarcity of all food, and so great a famine, that nature is brutified, men become savage cannibals to eat up one another, and young infants, being torn into morsels, return into the bowels of their tender mothers.

II. Man, by sin, lost his sovereignty over all the creatures in this lower world. When he fell, he was no more a master, but a slave; when he sinned, he was deposed from his empire, and became a most despicable and wretched inferior; all the other creatures, by the law of creation, were put under his feet; but when he transgress'd the law of God, they were ready to trample upon him, and became as much his enemies, as they were before his friends. When any of the creatures rise up against us, and offer violence to us, it is to plead God's cause against us; and as it is a fruit of the fall,

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it ought to bring to our remembrance, with sorrow, our apostacy from God, and our rebellion against him.

III. The first man's sin brought the death of the body, and all the afflictive evils which serve to bring it, and are forerunners of it; as all lingring or violent distempers, painful diseases, and terrible and surprizing accidents. Instead of that vigorous health, that absolute freedom from acute pains, that unmolested tranquility, and that durable and perpetual security against death, which man would have had, if he had not sin'd, we have now the grieving sense of unavoidable decays, the languors of innumerable maladies, the sweat of hard labour, the burdens of oppressing necessity, to imbitter our passage through the dark and dreary vale of this world; and we have the fear and horror of approaching death, to terrify and torment us. The words of *Job* are a true description of every man, in his mortal state, *Job* xiv. 1, 2. *Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.* If man had not departed from God, neither sickness, nor death, would ever have come near us; but now death waylays young and old every moment, and it sometimes cuts down at once such great numbers, and the mortality is so great, that the living are not sufficient to bury or bewail the dead.

IV. The first man's sin brought the death of the soul. This is that which brings man's misery to the greatest extremity. All that has been said before, is as nothing, if compared to the death of the soul. There are three things in the death of the soul; *viz.* the loss of God's image, the loss of his favour, and the desert and feeling of his displeasure.

1. In the death of the soul, there is the loss of God's image. *Adam*, upon his fall, was strip'd of that perfect holiness, wherewith he was created: as this loss came upon the first man by sin, so it comes upon all of us. There is now a general disorder in the faculties of our souls, and because of this general disorder, our inferior and ignoble faculties govern our superior and more noble faculties. As all the faculties of our souls are disorder'd, so they are depraved: instead of that created righteousness which we have lost, our whole nature is so far vitiated and corrupted, that we are altogether disabled from acting conformably to the law of creation.

(1.) Our understandings are covered with thick darkness. The first man, by hearkening to the serpent, lost his connatural and implanted knowledge: he lost the knowledge of all good, and got the sorrowful experience of all evil. As this was his loss, so we are under it: we are confused and indistinct in all the apprehensions we have of things natural, and we are stark blind with respect to things spiritual, and have no perception.

perception of them. There is no more pure light in our understandings, than there is true holiness in our wills; the one is as full of errors concerning God, as the other is of enmity against him.

If the over-spreading cloud of darkness, which is naturally upon our understandings, be the loss of God's image, in a prime part of it, what censure then can be too severe for the *Papists*, who commend ignorance in divine matters? When the *Papists* teach that ignorance is the mother of devotion, they make one special part of *Adam's curse*, to be a blessing of their religion.

(2.) Our wills are full of obstinacy, and are most averse to God, instead of imbracing him as our chiefest good.

(3.) Our affections and lower faculties are as violent and impetuous, as they are irregular and exorbitant. The motion of our affections is downwards and from God, but not upwards and towards him. When our affections cleave to all that is evil, they distaste and disrelish all that is good.

As we are fallen creatures, there is nothing but thick darkness in our understandings, the greatest obstinacy and perverseness in our wills, and madness and fury in our affections. This is the constitution of our souls, in our fallen state, and therefore the whole tendency of our corrupt nature, is, to yield homage to any thing,

thing, rather than to God, to whom only we owe all service and obedience.

Our depraved nature puts us upon a continual departure from God, and upon contriving how to extenuate our sins, and to plead for them, when we should come to a free confession of them. We have a most undeniable proof of this, in the first man and woman, when they fell.

[1.] When they should have returned to God, they run from him: They went about to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord, among the gloomy shades of the trees of the garden. *Gen. iii. 8.* When God sought them out, they were so far from thoughts of seeking after him, that they fled from his presence, and proceeded in that woful apostacy, which they had begun. All of us follow our first parents, in their departure from God; and it may be said of us, as it was of the impenitent *Jews*, we hold fast deceit, we refuse to return. *Jer. viii. 5.* *Why then is this people of Jerusalem fidden back, with a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.*

[2.] Both the man and the woman excused themselves, instead of confessing their sin to God. The man threw his sin upon the woman, and the woman threw the blame of her sin upon the serpent.

The man threw his sin upon the woman, as if she had been the cause of his fall. When the man threw his sin upon the woman, he then tacitly

tacitly accused God, as if he had given him the woman, not to be for his help, but for his ruin. Gen. iii. 12. *The woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* It is as if he had ſaid, if I had been left alone, as I was created, I had not eat, but the woman that thou gaveſt to me, for a meet help, proved my tempter and snare. *Adam* did not pray to God for a pardon, but threw his ſin upon him: when he could not be like God in knowledge, he endeavour'd to make God like himſelf in ſin.

As the man threw his ſin upon the woman, ſo the woman threw the blame of her ſin on the ſerpent. Gen. iii. 13. *The ſerpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* She did not deny her ſin, but ſhe excus'd it. It is as if ſhe had ſaid, if I had been let alone, I ſhould not have eat, but a cunning ſerpent ſet upon me, and beguiled me. She thought ſhe was to be excus'd, be-cause ſhe was beguil'd; but her excuse made her more guilty before God, and ſhe was defil'd by that which ſhe thought would purge her.

2. In the death of the ſoul, there is the loſs of God's favour, which is our happiness. Our happiness, in the highest degree of it, or in its utmoſt perfection, is no other than the full and conſtant fruition of God's favour. What is heaven, but the immediate communication of God's love, in all its ſweetneſs, without any interruption? The favour of God is all the good we can enjoy in this life, and all the good that

that we are capable of enjoying, without intermission or termination, in the life to come. When we have God's favour, we shall then receive all the good from God, which we can enjoy to eternity.

When *Adam* fell, he lost God's favour; and when he lost God's favour, he was depriv'd of communion with him; and when he was depriv'd of communion with him, he lost the enjoyment of all good: instead of that sweet communion which he had with God, his miserable successors converse with the Devil, suffer his tyranny continually, and live among themselves, not like men, but like lions, tigers, vipers, and dragons. The descendants from *Adam* are estranged from God, as he is the overflowing spring of all blessedness, and they are enemies and haters of his likeness: it is for this reason, that they choose to persecute the innocent, whom they ought to imitate; and they are not content barely to murder them in whom God's image is restored, but they are often witty to find out torments, and such contrivances as hell can inspire them with, to tempt them to deny the truth, and to worship stocks and stones.

3. In the death of the soul, there is the desert and feeling of God's displeasure. When *Adam* sin'd, he not only lost God's favour and friendship, but he came under his hatred and wrath. As the sin of *Adam* is imputed, and as his corrupt nature is transmitted to us, we are under

under the desert of God's displeasure as soon as we are born ; and if we do not get from under God's curse, in this life, we must lie under his displeasure for ever. We come into the world under the desert of God's wrath, and if we come under the execution of it, we shall be separated from all good, and we must endure the severest punishment, and a punishment which will be endless. When we cannot bear a punishment which is infinite in measure, and which can only be a compensation to the offended justice of God, we must undergo a punishment which is infinite, or eternal, in duration, and will have no end. To fall under the displeasure and wrath of God, in all the weight and fierceness of it, is to be in a state which is so miserable, that it cannot be worse ; without any possible hope that ever it will be better. It is to be where life is the greatest burden, where all hope dies, where despair reigns, where death only lives, and where the thoughts of lost happiness, and the tormenting sense of the sharpest ever-during pain, bring a misery which is far greater than fear can conceive.

IV. *A vindication of the infinite holiness and justice of God, with respect to the punishment which he inflicts for the first man's sin.*

I come now to offer some considerations, to vindicate the infinite holiness, justice, and equity

ty of God, with respect to the punishment which he inflicts for the first man's sin. To be banished from God's glorious presence, and to come eternally under his punishing justice, is the reward of the first sin. Men of corrupt judgments, and profligate lives, are exceeding forward to plead against God. When men plead against God, we ought to plead for him, and to endeavour to be furnish'd with arguments to refute their calumnies. I shall therefore prove, that the punishment of eternal death is not greater than the first sin, altho' it was a temporary offence, deserved, in regard of *Adam* and all his posterity.

I. The Law which God gave *Adam* for his rule, as it was most holy, so it was every way adapted to his perfect reasonable nature, and his obedience to it was most pleasant and delightful to himself; therefore when he broke such a law, it was most equitable for God to punish his sin. When *Adam* had brought guilt upon himself, and upon all men, it was necessary for punishment to follow, for the vindication of God's provoked justice. When God proclaim'd his mercy to *Moses*, he also declar'd the unrelenting strictness of his avenging justice in reference to sin. Exod. xxxiv. 7. *The Lord God that will by no means clear the guilty.* The original is no more than this, *That will by no means clear.* The meaning of the words is, where there is sin, God will not clear from the guilt of it, without the undergoing a deserved punishment.

punishment. When *Adam* fell, there was a necessity for him either to do that which was infinitely good, to satisfy the justice of God, or he and his posterity were to be liable to God's infinite wrath ; but *Adam*, in his fallen state, was so far from being able to do any thing which bore the shadow of a real satisfaction for his first sin, that he multiply'd his provocations against God, by his new crimes ; therefore he and his posterity came under the desert of eternal punishment.

II. There was a necessity for God to make good his threatening. *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* This threatening was immediately fulfill'd in *Adam*, when he sinned, as to the loss of God's image, the loss of his favour, and the desert of his displeasure ; and it is fulfill'd in the same way, in all of us, when we come into the world ; and if it had not been for the intervention of a Mediator, God's threatening would have been fulfill'd in the actual punishment of *Adam* and all of us to eternity. When the command of God was broke, if his threatening had not been fulfill'd, three things would have followed, which are most dishonourable to God, and inconsistent with his perfections.

1. If the threatening of God had not been fulfill'd, upon the breach of the law, there would have been a different and contradictory will in God. God would have willed one thing before the fall, and another thing after ; but this

this could not be in God. God changes his works, but he never changes his will ; he wills many changes, but his will is unchangeable, and is always the same.

2. If the threatening of God had not been fulfill'd, God would have been brought under the charge of falsehood ; but it is impossible for falsehood to be found in God.

3. If the threatening of God had not been fulfill'd, the accusation of falsehood, which might have been brought against God, would not only have been confirm'd, but the Devil would have triumphed in the ruin of God's honour. The Devil contradicted the threatening of God, and said, that if the man and woman eat of the forbidden fruit, they should not surely die. If God had not inflicted what was threatened, he would have falsified his own word, the Devil would have been justified in the charge which he brought against the truth of God, and both he, and his black revolting tribe, would have insolently triumph'd over the reproached honour of God. It was necessary for God to bring *Adam's* sin under a deserved punishment, that he might vindicate himself from the imputation of falsehood.

III. That which is agreeable to the infinite purity of God's nature, is most just for him to do ; but it was agreeable to the infinite purity of God's nature, to punish the sin of *Adam*, according to the desert of it. This may be proved from two things ;

i. It

1. It may be proved from God's hatred of sin. *Hab. i. 13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.* The sense of the words is this, the purity of God is so absolute, that it is utterly impossible that ever he can look upon sin, to allow, to approve, or in the least to countenance it. Sin is that which God hates naturally, infinitely, and eternally: when he is reconciled to sinners through Christ, he can never be reconciled to their sins. This is the reason why justified persons, when they come to have more of the light of faith, to read the pardon of their sins with a triumphant joy, rise higher in their hatred of sin, that so they may bear a greater conformity to the invariable disposition which is in God, with respect to sin. If sin be what God hates naturally, infinitely, and eternally, then it is just for him to punish it with a punishment which answers the infinite purity of his nature.

2. It may be proved from the infinite hatred which God expresses against men, because of sin. *Psalm v. 5. Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.* He does not hate them as they are his creatures, but he hates them as they are sinners, or workers of iniquity. The hatred of God, against the workers of iniquity, is his inflexible will to proceed against them, as a judge, in bringing upon them a punishment commensurate to the evil of sin. When the workers of iniquity are most hateful and loath-

some to God, because of their sins, it is just with God, to bring them under the power of his anger.

IV. All sin, because of the guilt of it, brings punishment, as its proper fruit and effect, and therefore the sin of *Adam* could not be without a due and just reward. Some sins are much greater than other sins; but every sin is mortal, or deserves eternal death.

1. Some sins are much greater than other sins, because they are aggravated by their circumstances. John xix. 11. *He who delivered me unto thee, hath the greater sin.* Pilate's sin was mortal, but it was not so great as the sin of the Jewish Priests and Pharisees: For, Pilate was a foreigner, or stranger, but they were natives, and the principal members of the Jewish church. What he did was out of compliance with the *Roman* imperial power; but they persecuted Christ out of envy and malice: he had not the privilege of knowing the Scripture prophecies and promises, concerning Christ; but they were bound to search the Scriptures, and they knew the place where Christ was born. Sins by their circumstances are aggravated, and therefore some men are far greater sinners than others.

2. Every sin is mortal or deserves eternal death. Rom. vi. 23. *The wages of sin is death.* It is not said, the wages of such and such swelling and aggravated sins is death; but the wages of sin, in the general and without except-

ing any sin, is death. All sin, as it strikes at the divine nature, is mortal; and therefore the Popish distinction of mortal and venial sins, is false and blasphemous. Every sin, as it draws a veil over the perfections of God, clouds his manifestative glory, is contrary to his nature, is a breach of his law, and comes from the same fountain from whence the greatest sins proceed, deserves God's curse, and the punishment which follows upon the execution of it. Rom. ii. 9. *Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does evil.* Tribulation notes that pain or torment of the soul which is great to an agony: *σενοχωρία*, anguish or oppression, notes the punishment of the body, as it is vexed with tortures; it signifies a punishment which cannot possibly be avoided; all this comes upon men, for the doing of evil.

If every sin deserves eternal death, then from the greater to the less, it may be strongly argued, that *Adam's* sin much more deserved eternal death, because it was the spring of all other sins, it was the sin of *Adam*, as he was the representative of all men, it included all sin in it, and it was a sin done against the clearest light of knowledge, in a state of perfection.

V. Every sin, tho' it be but a temporal offence, and finite in it self, deserves eternal punishment, because, as it is done against God, it may be said to be infinite in its guilt. The dimensions of the evil of sin are to be taken

from the person, who is offended by it. Some traces and prints of this may be seen, in the penalties which are inflicted among men; he that strikes a prince, or ruler, is adjudged to greater severities, than he that strikes a peasant, or one of the inferior rank of men: he that betrays a whole nation, is reckoned by the consent of all, to be a greater criminal, than he who betrays a private person. If we would judge aright of the evil of sin, we ought to consider it, as it is done against the infinite goodness, and against the infinite majesty of God.

1. Sin is done against the infinite goodness of God. The goodness of a person increases the evil of the offence, which is offered to him; the better any one is, the greater is the sin which is committed against him. As God is infinitely good, so any sin against him is infinitely evil, objectively considered, and so draws out God's infinite hatred against it.

2. Sin is done against the infinite majesty of God: it is done against a God who is a mighty and a terrible God. Deut. x. 17. *The Lord your God is a God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible God.* Sin is committed against a God, before whom the sun, moon, and stars are darkened, the angels cover their faces, all created beauty is deformity, all strength is weakness, all knowledge is vain, all wisdom is folly, and all the perfections of the creatures

tures are mere nullities. The majesty of God is infinite, and because every sin is a proud contempt of him, therefore it deserves infinite hatred and revenge, equal to the majesty of God, who is offended by it. It was for one aspiring and rebellious thought against the majesty of God, that Lucifer, and all the sons of the morning were exiled from the glorious presence of God, and were irrevocably condemned to undergo everlasting punishment.

If the sin of *Adam* was inexcusable, as it was a breach of that law which was every way suited to his perfect nature; if there was a necessity for God to fulfil his threatening, when *Adam* sinned, that he might appear to be consistent with himself, and not come under the charge of falsehood; if all sin be contrary to the infinite purity of God's nature; if punishment be the consequent fruit of sin; if every sin, although it be a temporary offence, and finite in itself, be infinite in its guilt, as it is done against the infinite holiness, and the infinite majesty of God; then it was just and equitable, for God to bring *Adam*, and all his posterity, under the sentence of eternal death, because of the first sin.

V. *The Application.*

I shall now make some application of the doctrinal truth in four things.

F 3

I. If

I. If it was by sinning against God, that man lost his created integrity, and brought himself, and us, into the greatest misery, then we may in the fall see the evil of sin. What evil must there be in sin, which has turned all our beauty into deformity, our glory into shame, our riches into poverty, our fulness into emptiness, and has hurled us down from our eminent station, which we had by the creating goodness of God, into that unfathomable abyss of misery, out of which nothing can raise us, but the omnipotent arm of a Redeemer? when we behold our selves thrown down from the pinnacle of our created felicity, stripp'd of all our primitive righteousness, disrobed of our garments of integrity, the glory of our innocence, grovelling in the mire of sensuality, at variance with God, broke from our maker, seduced by a liar, hanging over hell, and in the jaws of destruction; we may then see the evil and malignity of sin, which brought about all this. Sin must have the greatest evil in it, when it is the cause of all other evils, and consequently it ought to be the object of our severest hatred and detestation.

II. If it was by the apostacy of the first man, that we fell from God, and lost our created happiness, then we ought to get a right knowledge of the fall.

i. I shall

1. I shall shew how we must get a right knowledge of the fall. It is not to be got by the light of reason, but only by the light of the word and spirit.

(1.) The right knowledge of the fall is not to be got by the light of reason, because that is now darkness itself. The folly of them is sharply to be reprehended, who discourse of the fall by the light of nature, and the deceiving rules of philosophy. *Aristotle* says, that none are to be blamed for the things which they have by nature, and which they cannot hinder: this in some sense is the reasoning of all ungodly men. What is the language of their hearts? It is this, are we to be judged sinners, and to be punished for *Adam's* sin, that we could not hinder, and which was committed thousands of years before we were born? atheistical wranglings of this kind, fill the hearts of all unregenerate men, while they have their depraved reason for their guide.

(2.) The right knowledge of the fall is to be got only by the light of the word, and spirit.

[1.] It is to be got only by the light of the word, which reveals it externally. The written word of God only can inform us, that a covenant was made with all men in *Adam*, that this covenant was broke by *Adam*, as he was the federal head of all men, that God in justice imputed *Adam's* sin to all

his seed, as they were in him, and were represented by him, in the covenant of works; and that they all came under the curse of God, and the desert of eternal punishment. If we do not rest satisfied in this Scripture-account of the fall, we shall become vain in our reasonings, we shall lose our souls by our perverse arguings, and when we would be thought to be wise, we shall prove to be the greatest fools.

[2.] It is to be got only by the light of the spirit, which reveals it internally. To know the fall as we ought, is a great part of heavenly wisdom. We may hear many sermons and read over several books about it, and yet know nothing of it as we should, if the spirit does not lead us into the knowledge of it.

It may be said, when have we that knowledge of it, which is by the word, externally, and from the spirit, internally? I answer: when we have a practical knowledge of it, and in some respect are as sensible of it, as a man is of his disjointed and broken bones. There is a verbal speculative knowledge of the fall in many who hear the word, but a practical knowledge of it is to be found in few. We must pray to God that he would, by the word and spirit, give us a practical knowledge of the fall, that we may never content our selves, till we be delivered from all the sad effects of it.

2. I shall

2. I shall shew why we ought to get a practical knowlege of the fall. It is a thing necessary to our salvation, because of two things.

(1.) When men are without a practical knowledge of the fall, they live in unbelief, and in all other sins. Insensibleness of the fall, is the principal cause of unbelief. The unbelieving Jews gloried in their descent from *Abraham*, but remembred not that they were the offspring of the first *Adam*. John viii. 33. *We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man.* As their pride made them not stick to speak the greatest falsehood, because they were then enslaved tributaries to the *Roman* emperor, so their insensibleness of the fall made them boast of their freedom, when they were in spiritual bondage. When men are not convinc'd of their fallen state, they have no fear of their danger, and without any trouble in their spirits they live under the power of unbelief: as long as they are under the power of unbelief, there is nothing for them but damnation. Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth not, shall be damned.*

(2.) When sinners have no sense of their fallen state, they can have no desires after a Saviour. When a condemn'd traytor believes nothing of the verdict, which is brought in against him, he will not sue for a pardon. When sinners do not think themselves to be in a lost condition, they can never be persuaded to cry out and say, what shall we do to

to be saved? if sinners saw themselves in a perishing state, it would be impossible for them to continue in it, and not seek for a remedy. The revelation of a Saviour is folly to them, who do not feelingly know that they are lost. Christ is never precious and amiable to sinners, till they come to see themselves to be most vile and miserable. When sinners see themselves lost, they begin to be happy; but while they are ignorant of the fall, there can be no hope of their salvation. We have not a resurrection to life in the second *Adam*, when we are insensible of our spiritual death in the first.

III. If all men came under the desert of eternal death, because of *Adam's* sin, then it is a marvellous forbearance that God exercises towards the greatest sinners. It is a suspension of vindictive justice, that every man is not thrown into hell, as soon as he comes into the world. God restrains his wrath from breaking out upon wicked men, to give them their desert, and he exercises great bounty towards them: he gives them not only a reprieve, but he protects and provides for them: they taste largely of his plenteous liberality, when they do nothing but multiply acts of hostility against him.

IV. If all men, because of *Adam's* transgression, came under a death in sin, and under the desert of an eternal death of punishment, then this may be applied to sinners, who

who are yet without a saviour, and to them who are safe in the hands of a redeemer.

1. It may be applied to sinners who are yet without a Saviour, to press them to improve the season of God's forbearance and patience towards them, in seeking deliverance from their miserable condition, thro' Christ. When *Saul* sought his lost asses, and *Micha* his false gods, shall not we seek a redeemer? there is no way left for sinners to escape, but by flying to Christ for security: as he only can satisfy the justice of God, for sin, and reconcile apostate sinners by the merit of his death, so he only can renew their corrupt nature, and can infuse life into their souls, by the almighty power of the spirit.

2. It may be applied to them who are safe in the hands of a redeemer. It may put all them who are recovered from their fallen state, upon two things.

(1.) To admire the infinite wisdom of God, which is seen in their recovery from their fallen state. God has conquered the spiritual enemies of believers, by their own weapons, and destroyed them by their own counsels. The devil tempted man, who was made in the image of God, to desire to be as God: when the devil put man upon seeking to be as great as his maker, he thought to make him more miserable than the brutes: this was the device of the devil; but by this device God destroyed the devil's kingdom. The devil

devil tempted man, to covet to be equal to God, that man might perish eternally: but God sent his own son to become man, that he might restore fallen man, and ruin the power of the devil.

(2.) To magnify and adore the rich grace of God, which brightly shines forth in their redemption, from the misery of their fallen state. When the world is spared for a season, in a way of patience, believers are saved by special grace. We that are called to the hope of eternal life, were born under the guilt of *Adam's* sin, which deserved eternal death. In the time of our unregeneracy we did nothing but sin, since we have come under the new birth, we have done nothing without sin, and yet by grace we are saved. How merciful and gracious has God been in not cutting us off, when we have added many thousands of sins to *Adam's* sin, and have, by every sin, brought our selves under a new desert of eternal death? shall we not exalt that God, and live to him, who forbore us in our rebellion, pitied us in our impurity, spared us in our disobedience, fought us out when we had wandered from him, and saved us when we were lost?

24 OC 62

OF



OF THE
IMPUTATION of ADAM's Sin
To all his
POSTERITY.







OF THE
Imputation of *ADAM*'s Sin.

ROM. V. 29.

By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.



THE imputation of *Adam's* sin to his posterity, is a mystery to all natural men, and they believe nothing of it. That by one man's disobedience, all the men in the world should be made sinners, and that they should be liable to the punishment of eternal death, as soon as they are born, for a sin committed long before they came into the world, is a thing unreasonable and absurd in the judgment of all unregenerate men: it is sufficient

sufficient, say they, if we can answer for our selves, but it is unjust that we should be responsible for a sin which was committed by another. The imputation of *Adam's* sin is denied, and rejected, by all them who are in a state of degeneracy; but it is received, as a great truth, by all them who have passed from death to life. When we have no sense of the transmission of *Adam's* sin to us, as it makes us sinners before God, and worthy of condemnation, we are ignorant of the spring of all our misery, we live without faith in Christ, and without repenting of our sins. When we do not believe, that the disobedience of the old *Adam* is charged upon us, we have no desires that the obedience of Christ may be made ours. We must know our selves to be guilty in the first *Adam*, before ever we shall seek righteousness in the second.

The intent of the Apostle, from the twelfth verse of this chapter, is to prove that sin and death came by the first *Adam*, and that righteousness and life came by the second: he makes a collation between the first *Adam* and the second, as they are two publick heads, that the darkness and deformity of the first, may set forth the transcendent brightness and glory of the second.

In this verse there are two things.

I. That which comes from the first *Adam* to all mankind, as he is their head. *By one*

one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.

II. That which comes from Christ to all the elect as he is their Head. *By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* By the obedience of one, is meant the active and passive obedience of Christ Mediator, as he fulfill'd the whole law of God: The many who are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, are all the elect, who are under him, as their federal head: Christ justifies, regenerates, and sanctifies them all in time.

It is from the former part of the verse that I shall speak: *By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.* Disobedience is to be understood of *Adam's* breach of the law of God. By *Adam's* violation of the law of God, all descended from him, by a common, ordinary generation, were made sinners. They are here called many, not as they are opposed to all, but as they are opposed to one man, by whose disobedience they were made sinners. Sin was not God's work, but it was from the devil's temptations, and from man's rebellion. It was the first man's disobedience that brought all his children under the black tincture of sin, which nothing but the blood of Christ can remove and wash away.

It may be ask'd, how it was, that by the first *Adam's* disobedience all men were made sinners? To this question I answer, They were made sinners by it two ways, *viz.* They were

82 OF THE IMPUTATION

made sinners by imputation; the first sin of *Adam* was formally imputed to them, and as it was imputed to them, they were made sinners: and they were made sinners by infusion. *Adam's* sin was imputed to all men, and because of the imputation of *Adam's* first sin to them, they are morally polluted, are born into the world with a depraved nature, and sin lives in them as soon as they begin to live: they come into the world as naturally bent and resolv'd upon contradicting the will of God, as they are inclin'd to eat when they are most hungry. The depravation of man's nature follows, as a punishment of the imputation of *Adam's* sin. All men are made sinners by *Adam's* disobedience, both by imputation, and by infusion; but the words are properly to be understood of their being made sinners by imputation, when it is said, *by one man's disobedience many were made sinners.*

The doctrinal proposition which I shall raise from the words, is this;

All men, by the imputation of Adam's first sin, were, and are, made sinners.

In speaking to this doctrine, I shall do three things.

I. I shall prove, that all men, by the imputation of *Adam's* sin, were and are made sinners.

II. I shall shew, upon what just grounds the first man's sin is imputed to us, and becomes ours.

III. I shall make some application.

I. Adam's *sin prov'd to be imputed to all men.*

I shall endeavour to prove that all men by the imputation of *Adam's* sin, were and are made sinners. I shall give one scripture-proof of this truth, which is full and plain. *Rom. v. 12. 14. As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression.* There are four things which may be noted in the words.

I. Sin was the parent of death, and death was the child of sin. If there had been no sin, there would have been no death. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.* Sin first made its entrance into the world, and then death followed.

II. Death by sin obtain'd a dominion, without control, over all men: *death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Death is a sovereign universal monarch, that throws down, and carries all before it: it is like a

flood that sweeps away all, and leaves nothing behind it. The killing power of death is that from which none are exempted. It is to death's scepter, that young and old, weak and strong, rich and poor, high and low, prince and peasant, must stoop and yield.

III. A distinct time of the reign of death is mentioned: *death reigned from Adam to Moses*. It is as if the Apostle had said, death did not enter only since the promulgation of the law, in the wilderness, but it took place long before the written law was given at mount *Sinai*; it began its reign as soon as *Adam sinned*.

IV. Some who are subject to death, are distinguished from others: it may be said, who are they? I answer, Infants, who die before they come under the guilt of any actual sin. *Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*. Why is it that infants, who never sinned actually, come under the empire of death? It is because *Adam's sin* is imputed to them, and his corrupt nature is found in them. The prime and immediate cause of their death, is, the imputation of *Adam's sin*, and next to that the vitiosity of their nature: if they were not under the guilt of sin, and if they were not defiled by it, they could not be mortal.

II. *Of the grounds of the imputation of Adam's sin to all men.*

Having prov'd *Adam's* sin to be imputed, I shall now shew, upon what just grounds, the first man's sin is imputed to us, and becomes ours.

I. We were all in *Adam*, when he sinned, and therefore his sin was ours, by participation. *Levi* is said to give tithes to *Melchise-deck*, because he was in the loins of *Abraham*. Heb. vii. 9. 20. I may argue from the less to the greater, if *Abraham's* giving tithes to the king of *Salem*, was *Levi's* act, tho' unborn, because he was in *Abraham's* loins, then much more *Adam's* disobedience is justly reckoned ours, because we were all in him, as our universal root and principle.

II. *Adam* was not only our common parent, but our public representative, and covenant head. Rom. v. 14. he is called, $\tau\bar{\nu}\pi\bar{\nu}$ $\mu\acute{e}\lambda\lambda\sigma\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}$, *the type of him who was to come*. *Adam* typified Christ, so far as Christ and *Adam* were two federal heads, to two great parties.

In the headship of *Adam* with respect to us, there are two things to be considered.

1. God covenanted with *Adam* for all men: in him God made a covenant with all men, promising life, upon the condition of perfect perpetual obedience, but threatening death,

upon *Adam*'s disobedience: by virtue of this covenant, what *Adam* did was to be reputed ours, even as when a prince vests a subject with large possessions, but limits him and his heirs to certain conditions, which being broke, the children suffer a forfeiture, because of their father's disloyalty. We were all represented by the first *Adam*, and were one with him in the covenant of works, and therefore, by his disobedience to the law of that covenant, we were all made sinners. To make *Adam* our public representative, there was no necessity, that such a relation should be confer'd upon him by our explicit consent, but it was sufficient, that it was done by the righteous appointment of God, who had a sovereign authority to constitute *Adam* the head of all mankind.

2. There was a translation of our wills to *Adam*, and as he was to transact for us, so what he did was to be imputed to us. Among men, whatsoever the arbitrator does, may be said to be the will of them who choose him, because when they assign him to that office, they oblige themselves to will and allow what he does: it was so in *Adam*, and more also; the business in which he was employ'd, was his own as well as ours, he had our will and power transfer'd to him, and what he did became our act. If we had been all then living, when the covenant was made with *Adam* for us, we would most willingly have

have consented, that he should have been our surety and trustee to act for us. What could we have objected against his being so? could we have done better our selves? were not the conditions of the covenant most easy and reasonable? had not *Adam* a perfection of strength to observe and fulfill them? *Adam* was our publick head, he covenant'd for us, our will was transfer'd to him, and he was to transact on our behalf: if he had stood, his obedience was to have been ours; but when he became disobedient, his transgression was our sin, and God upon just grounds imputed it to us.

III. *The Application.*

I shall now make some Application.

I. If the sin of *Adam* be imputed to us, the first moment of our being constituted reasonable creatures, which is upon the union of soul and body, let us not then cherish rebellious thoughts about this truth, but let us endeavour to say, righteous and holy art thou, O Lord, in all thy ways! To rise up with contempt and rage against this truth, is a mark of unregeneracy and unbelief, and it proves persons to be under the power of darkness, and to be without all scripture-light; but when we fall under the conviction of *Adam's* sin, as it is our sin by imputation, when

86 OF THE IMPUTATION

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we have sorrow for it, and are humbled for it before God, we are then in a justified state, and have a renewed frame.

II. If we are all sinners before God, as soon as our souls are joined to our bodies, because of the imputation of *Adam's* sin to us, then the influencing belief of this truth will quiet our hearts, under the sharpest and most early afflictions, and we shall say with the prophet, Lam. iii. 39. *Wherefore does a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?* A living man has no reason to complain; he has a great and undeserved privilege, that he is a man, and not in the rank of the lowest and meanest brute creatures; he is also a living man when he might have been a dead man; and if he be under the light of the Gospel, he is not only a living man, but he lives to hear the joyful news of a Saviour, when he might have been under the despair, and feeling the torments of the damned. When a living man considers, that no sooner his soul and body came together, but *Adam's* sin was imputed to him, and that the actual sins, which he has committed since, are so many, that they are past his skill to reckon up; he must not complain, because of what he feels from the hand of God in this Life.

When God brings great trials and afflictions upon us, in the time of our youth, if we do not believe the imputation of *Adam's* sin to us, we are forward to make a complaint,

plaint, which is inexcusable in the mouths of blind ignorant heathens, much more in ours ; and we are ready to say, we were creatures unhappily born, we began our life in misery, and we were punish'd for this fault only, because we were born : this is a most wicked, as well as a most foolish complaint against God. It may be said, how shall we shut out such a blasphemous charge against God, from once entring into our thoughts ? I answer, we must do it thus, we must consider that *Adam's* sin was imputed to us, from the first hour of our being rational creatures, and that in the course of our lives, we have added to *Adam's* sin many thousands of actual sins, every one of which justly deserves eternal death. When we consider this, we shall not complain of what we suffer from the hand of God in this world, but shall see great reason to be thankful, that we have not misery, both in the greatest extremity, and eternity of it. All the afflictive evils, which we come under in this life, are infinitely less than what we deserve. If a magistrate should gently chastise the greatest murderer, instead of inflicting a capital punishment on him, this would be a great relaxation of justice towards him ; but it would carry no more a proportion to the forbearance of God towards us, under our smartest afflictions, as we are sinners by the imputation of *Adam's* sin, sinners in our conception and birth, and

90 OF THE IMPUTATION

sinners in our lives, than the smallest grain carries a proportion to the greatest mountain, or the least drop to the wide swelling ocean.

When God punishes sinners, after the most terrible manner, in this world, all that he lays upon them is nothing to what is their due, and is reserved in hell for them. If there be such gentleness in the judicial proceedings of God towards his enemies, whom he hates and strikes in his wrath, then there must be marvellous lenity in all his dealings with his children and friends, whom he corrects and chastens in his love.

III. If it was by the disobedience of the first *Adam* that we were all made sinners, then we ought to be sensible of *Adam's* sin, as we are all under it by nature: it is upon every one of us, till it be taken off; we have it either upon us, or we have it not.

1. If it lie upon us, there can be nothing but condemnation to us, if we abide under it: if we continue sinners, we must be punished, and have the reward of sinners. When the sin of *Adam*, which is imputed to us, lies as a great weight upon us, then all our actual sins, which are numberless, are as so many more weights thrown upon *Adam's* sin, to press us down into hell. If we always be found sinners, we shall be perpetually guilty, and so shall be eternally punished. The greatest wo must be our lot, if we are under the guilt

guilt of *Adam's* sin, because when this is not taken off, the guilt of all our actual sins lies upon us, which is ten thousand times more than enough, to sink us down into the gulph of eternal misery.

2. If the sin of *Adam*, which is imputed to us, be removed from us, it must be by Christ, because it cannot possibly be removed any other way. We ought to inquire whether Christ, who is the second *Adam*, has bore and carried away from us the sin of the first *Adam*, and all our actual sins, and whether of guilty sinners he has made us righteous before God. We are never clean, either from *Adam's* sin, as it is imputed to us; or from our own actual sins, till we are washed in the blood of the lamb. Revel. vii. 24. *They have wash'd their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb.* Blood makes red, but the blood of the lamb, because it makes sinners righteous, is said to make white. The Papists, and others who have too great a doctrinal union with them, have invented many ways to purge from sin, and to make sinners righteous, which will deceive and ruin all them who trust to them for cleansing and righteousness. When we must leave them to their own devices, let us seek cleansing only in the blood of Christ, and justification from *Adam's* sin, and from our actual sins, by his righteousness alone.

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92 OF THE IMPUTATION

It may be said, when are we made righteous by the righteousness of Christ? I answer, when the relative change, which he hath wrought out for us in justification, is followed by a real inward change, which he works in us. When he has redeemed us from all iniquity, he then turns us from all sin: when he justifies us, when we are ungodly, he renews us in heart and life, and leaves us not to dishonour and deny him, by our ungodly practices.

IV. If it was by the imputation of *Adam's* sin, that we were all made sinners, then if the imputation of *Adam's* sin be understood by us, we shall come to understand, how it is that we are made righteous before God. As it is by the imputation of sin, from the first *Adam* to us, that we are made sinners, so it is by the imputation of the obedience of the second *Adam* to us, that we are made righteous, and are justified before God. *Adam* was the covenant head of all men, and his sin was first imputed to them, and upon the imputation of his sin to them, they became guilty, were inherently polluted and defiled, and came under all the other sad effects of sin. Christ is the covenant head of all the elect, and his obedience is first imputed to them, to make them righteous before God, and then they partake of all the effects of his righteousness; such as the justification of their persons, the remission of their sins, the privi-

privilege of adoption, the gift of all inherent grace, and a fitness for eternal glory. As we are first made sinners, and then miserable, by the imputation of *Adam's* sin, so we are first made righteous, and then happy, by the imputation of Christ's obedience to us.



OF

24 OC 62



OF THE
CORRUPTION of MAN's Nature;
OR OF
ORIGINAL SIN.







OF
ORIGINAL CORRUPTION.

EPHES. ii. 3.

We were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others.



T is from *Adam's* sin imputed to us, which may be called original sin without us, and from the communication of *Adam's* corrupt nature to us, which is original sin within us, that all maladies and miseries proceed, which come upon either our souls or bodies. *Adam's* sin, as it is imputed to us, is the first spring of our misery, and *Adam's* corrupt nature, as it is convey'd to us, is the inter-

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nal cause of all the evil we do, and wherein we abound, to procure for our selves the greatest measure of punishment. As we ought to be sensible of *Adam's* sin, as it is imputed to us, that we may not be under the guilt of it, but get it taken off, and removed from us by Christ; so we must seek after a more distinct and extensive knowledge of the corruption of our nature, and of sin in us, that when we have the most dangerous disease in our selves, we may not die of it, and neglect the care which is provided for it in Christ, who is appointed of God, and sent by him into the world, not only to justify our persons, but to renew our inward frame.

The scope of the Apostle, in this chapter, is to incite the *Ephesians* to great thankfulness, for the infinite love and mercy of God towards them, in Christ Jesus: it is for this end, that he compares their former state of sin and misery with their present state of grace, that when they look'd down to the depth of misery, out of which the grace of God had brought them, they might have more adequate and sublimated thoughts of that glory, to which they were raised and advanced, in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle speaks of their former state of sin and misery, in the three first verses of this chapter.

1. It was a death in sin, *you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.*

Temporal death, which separates our souls from our bodies, is so terrible to nature, that we shrink at the thoughts of it ; but a death in sin ought to be far more terrible to us, because it separates us from God, who is our life and chiefest good ; and when we are not delivered from it, it will bring us to undergo a death of eternal misery.

2. When they were dead in sin, and could neither move nor act, with respect to what was spiritually good, they were not only alive, to do all that was contrary to God, and most hurtful to themselves, but all motions to sin in them were strengthened by two things.

(1.) The common course and custom of the world. *In time past ye walked according to the course of the world.* As all unregenerate persons choose to walk according to the course of the world, so the common practice of the world is the plea wherewith they bear themselves out, in all their impieties, and justify their invincible prejudices against repentance and reformation : they never once fear they shall miscarry, when they are in the way wherein most walk, and are found doing what most others do. With this plea they deceive and delude themselves in this life, but it will be no alleviation of their misery, to find themselves condemned and punish'd with a croud.

(2.) The power and efficacy of the devil, working in them. *You walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.* As the common course of the world serves greatly to draw forth the corrupt inclinations of unregenerate men, to sinful practices, so the devil's power, added to a bad example, prompts them, to act the wickedness of their hearts, with the greatest insolence and unbridled fury. When sinners have the general practice of the world for their pattern, and the devil to work in them, they are impetuous in their motion, to run forwards, to fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind, but never consider what their miserable end will be. When they fulfill the desires of the flesh, or abound in acts of profaneness and profligacy, they fulfill the devil's will; but when they fulfill the desires of the mind, or when they are guilty of malice, hypocrisy, vain-glory, pride and presumption, they are transformed into the devil's image.

When the Apostle had reminded the *Ephesians* of the misery of their state, and the sinfulness of their practice, before their conversion, he brings them, in the words of the text, to the radical cause of all the sin, which was in them, and had been done by them. *We were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others.* Our corrupt nature is the

cause of all lusts, whether of the flesh, or of the mind, and of all sinful actions. In the words there are three things.

I. The subjects, or persons, who are spoken of. *We were, as well as others.* The Apostle's words are a general position, wherein all the individuals of mankind are involved: he ranks himself with all others: it is as if he had said, all we Jews, as well as all the Gentiles, belong to this black list. The Jews who boasted insolently of their descent from *Abraham*, thought themselves happy, when all others were miserable; but the Apostle threw down their pride, over-turned their carnal confidence, and enroll'd them with the gentiles, who were without hope in this world, because they were without the knowledge of a Saviour.

II. That which all the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, are said to be in their unconverted state. *The children of wrath*, $\tauέκνα \deltaρυν$'s, children wholly exposed to wrath. Wrath signifies the infinite displeasure of God against sinners, or his righteous will to punish them, according to the evil of their sins. To be children of wrath, is to be under the judicial anger of God, and to be liable to all the evil of punishment, which is deserved by the evil of sin. This is the wrath of God, of which we are all children by birth.

III. That by which all men are made children of wrath: *by nature.* It is fit to en-

quire what is to be understood by nature, which makes us children of wrath. The Pelagians of old, and the Socinians and Arminians of late, who are friends to free will, but bitter enemies to God's free grace, say, that nature here signifies what is real and true, in opposition to what is only so in esteem and opinion. To this I answer: it must be granted, that, *by nature*, sometimes bears this sense, and we are really and truly under the displeasure of God, when we are under the guilt of our sins; but to take nature here in this signification, is to wrest it from its true meaning, and to contradict the drift and design of the Apostle. By nature here we must understand, nor what we have by imitation or custom, but what is interwoven with our constitution, which is rooted in us, and is according to our inbred inclinations: and it is likewise what we have by birth. Gal. ii. 15. *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.* How were they Jews by nature? it was by birth, or by their natural descent from *Abraham*. *By nature*, signifies either what is innate and bred in us, or what we have by birth. This is the general signification of the word *φύσις* in the new Testament.

The doctrinal proposition I shall raise from the words, is this,

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All men are born into the world, under the displeasure of God, as the whole frame of their souls is corrupted, and as they are full of sin.

In speaking to this truth, I shall do five things.

I. I shall shew, how all persons, who are born into the world, come to be corrupted by their birth, and so are born under the displeasure of God.

II. I shall prove, that the whole frame and constitution of the souls of all men is corrupted and depraved, by birth.

III. I shall give a description of that sin which is in all of us naturally, or as we are born into the world.

IV. I shall shew the great malignity and evil of it, as it justly brings us under the displeasure of God.

V. I shall make some improvement by way of application.

I. *How all persons, that are born into the world, come to be corrupted by their birth.*

I shall begin with shewing, how all persons who are born into the world, come to be corrupted by their birth, and so are born under the displeasure of God. The anger of God is a just, pure, holy anger, and therefore it presupposes the evil of sin, in all them who are the objects of it; if we were not inherently polluted, defiled, and full of sin by our birth, we should not be born children of wrath. Our corruption by birth is previous to our coming under the anger of God, and is that which brings us under his displeasure. It may be said, how is it that we are born in a depraved state? I answer: it is by our union to the first *Adam*, as we are in him, and under him, as our common parent and covenant head; as we are in and under the first *Adam*, we are made sinners by the imputation of his sin to us, and when his sin is imputed to us, then follows, by way of punishment, the communication of his corrupt nature to us. The sin of *Adam*, as it is imputed to us, legally attaints us, entails a curse on our generation and birth, and therefore we are born in the old *Adam's* image, and have the seminal principles of all evil in us. We first come under the imputation of *Adam's* sin, and then we have his corrupt nature

ture derived to us, so that sin in us is the immediate fruit of sin imputed to us. Our immediate parents are the channels and instruments to convey a corrupt nature to us; but *Adam* is the original cause of it. When God went about to confound the Jews, and to pluck from under them the pillars and props of their pride and arrogance, he rip'd up their sin from *Adam*. *Isai xliii. 27.* *Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.* The word which we turn teachers, may be translated intercessors, persons that come between contending parties. It is as if God had said thus, if I pass by all thy personal wickedness, yet I can find sufficient matter of condemnation against thee, in the very things wherein thou most confidently trustest: if thou trustest in thy father *Abraham*, and expectest to be saved, because thou art his seed, thou greatly deceivest thy self, because thou hast a father elder than *Abraham*; for thou hast *Adam* for thy father, and he hath sinned. If thou pleadest, that thou hast priests to come between me and thee, to offer up daily sacrifices, they can be no shelter or security to thee, because as they are children of the old *Adam*, they have transgressed against me. All that have come between us and *Adam*, have sinned; but *Adam* is the root and spring of all the corruption which is in us, and we have it all from him. We are corrupted by
our

our birth, because of what he did, in sinning against God, and so are born under God's displeasure.

II. *The whole frame of the souls of all men prov'd to be corrupted by birth.*

I shall now prove that the whole frame and constitution of the souls of all men, is corrupted and depraved by birth. I shall offer two unquestionable and undoubted proofs of the truth of this.

I. All men are born in sin, as they are from the first *Adam*, and they cannot be clean, because they are from a fountain which is unclean. Job. xiv. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* It is impossible that any man can be naturally pure, when he comes from a spring which is altogether impure. No mere creature can bring that which is holy and clear, out of that which is defiled and unclean. The first *Adam*, by sin, made the clean thing to be unclean; but it is the second *Adam* only that can make the unclean thing to be clean. The stream cannot but be the same with the fountain: what is originated or produc'd, must be specifically the same with the original. Joh. iii. 6. *That what is born of the flesh, is flesh.* The first *Adam*, by sin, made himself flesh, and as we are all from him, we are no better than flesh. The first man, by his

his transgression, infected and corrupted nature, and ever since nature has infected and corrupted all men, coming into the world. It is for this reason that every man is a transgressor from the womb. *Isai. xlviii. 8. I know that thou wouldest deal treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.* To be a transgressor from the womb, is to be a sinner by birth.

II. All men are not only sinners by birth, but they are sinful in their conception before they are born. *David* knew the corruption of man's nature, and he felt the sad effects of it in himself; he was sensible, that the corruption of his nature was the cause of all the obliquity which was in his actions, and therefore when he confess'd his black and heinous sin of adultery, he acknowledged his sinful conception. *Psal. li. 5, Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* That the Psalmist speaks of his being born in sin, is so understood both by Jews and Christians; but the Pelagians, Socinians and Remonstrants deny this, and endeavour to destroy the true meaning of the words. They say, *David* here confesses his father's sin in begetting him, and his mother's sin in conceiving him. This interpretation, which they force upon the words, is so manifestly false, that it is one pregnant proof of the total depravation of our nature, which is the thing they deny: if our nature were

were not wholly corrupted and depraved, never any men would have been so shameless and bold, as to have put such a corrupt gloss as this on the word of God. To affirm that *David* here confess'd the sin of his father and mother, is most false.

1. A confession of the sin of his father and mother, did not consist with his design, in this penitential psalm, which was, not to accuse others, or to register their sins, but to confess his own sin, and to aggravate it, by having recourse to the corruption of his nature: it cannot be thought, that repenting *David* went about to excuse himself, and to reproach his parents; this would have been to have added sin to sin, instead of repenting of it.

2. The contrivers of this interpretation, as they are highly uncharitable, so they are guilty of a presumptuous forgery, which may be proved upon them thus: when we mention the sins of God's people, which are recorded in the scriptures, we ought to do it with great caution, and only when there is a necessity to do it, either for the proving the imperfection of the strongest believers, in their present state and condition, or to support and comfort despairing souls; but as it is contrary to all charity, so it is a presumptuous forgery, to suppose and devise crimes, and then charge them upon such persons, who stand clear from the accusation of any gross sin,

sin, in the word of God: where is there any thing said, in the scripture, either of *David's* father or mother, to give us reason to imagine that he ascribed the sinfulness of his conception and birth to them?

What some furious free-willers say about *David's* parents, that they may put a perverse sense on *David's* words, may lead us to observe, that when men set themselves to defend error, and to oppose the truth, their arguments are often so weak and inconclusive, as to prove nothing but this, that they have cast off all fear and reverence of God, as well as lost the common stock of their reason.

3. There is something in *David's* words which unanswerably proves, that he speaks of his being born with a corrupt, depraved nature: it is this, he does not barely say, *in sin did my mother conceive me*, but he says, *behold, I was shapen in iniquity*. In this, he bewails his sinful formation in the womb, wherein neither he himself, nor his parents, were actors, but only passive. It is as if he had said, my formation in the womb, which convey'd my nature to me, and constituted me a man, and wherein both my parents and my self were passive, brought me under defilement, and made me sinful before God. When *David* had no will to consent or act, he was then formed in sin. As it was with *David*, so it is with every one of us, as we come

come into the world. When the mass of our bodies is first organiz'd and enlivened by the infusion of our souls, we then have *Adam's* sin imputed to us, and this brings the whole frame of our souls under a total over-spreading defilement.

III. *A description of original sin.*

Having prov'd that the frame of mens souls is depraved by birth, I shall give a description of that sin which is in all men and women naturally, or as they are born into the world. This I shall do in four things.

I. It is a sin which is in all men equally: some are not more depraved by it than others, but they are all equally depraved by it, altho' they be not all equally vicious in their actions. This sin is the same in all, but it neither works in all with the same violence, nor in the same way. Actual sins, of a contrary tendency, come from it: it makes one covetous, when it makes another profuse: it leads one to scepticism, to dispute against all religion, and to believe nothing, when it carries another to the highest degree of the rankest superstition, and with a blockish credulity to believe the grossest absurdities, without once examining, whether they have any evidence or probability of truth: it makes one a publican, or a sinner that runs out to all acts of profligacy, without restraint, when

when it makes another a demure Pharisee, or a varnish'd hypocrite. The corruption of our nature is the same in all, but it is changeable and different, in the ways wherein it puts it self forth.

II. It is a sin bred in us, or it hath its being in us, before the acting and working of our wills. It is as inseparable to our nature, as mortality is to our bodies: it is not of the substance of a man, but it cleaves as close to him, as if it were one with his frame and constitution; it is for this reason properly called original sin. Original is not a scripture-word, but the sense of it is in the scriptures. Any words (if their meaning be in the scriptures) may be used, either to discover old revived heresies, or to oppose new invented errors.

III. The sin of our nature, as it is bred in us, so it has a constant abode in us. It dwells in us. Rom. vii. 17. *Sin that dwells in me.* It dwells partially in a saint, and he feels the struglings of it, which put him to no small trouble, but it dwells in unregenerate sinners, in its full strength. There are three things meant by the dwelling of sin in us.

1. The soul of every unregenerate sinner is the seat of all sin, its proper center, the house where it dwells, and the kennel of this monster.

2. Sin has the full possession of every man by nature. This is the reason why a man that

that is unregenerate, never feels, or cries out of the burden and weight of his sin, but on the contrary delights in his subjection and bondage to it: he makes no complaints of its service, till he comes to receive its wages: he is never disquieted in his spirit for sin, as it is sin; he has often much trouble by it, and from it, but no trouble for it, because it hath the full possession of his soul.

3. Sin has a permanent abode, in all of us. It does not lodge in us for a night, but it dwells in us, till the hour of death: it has a fast hold of the worst men, and it continually disturbs the best. It is not like actual sins, which we forsake and cast off by repentance, but it has a permanent dwelling in us, and we can never in this life get fully rid of it: it will keep its abode in us as long as we are in our imperfect state. As this sin dwells permanently in us, we are never out of its danger, and therefore we must always endeavour, by a fiduciary reliance on Christ's strength, to oppose the first risings and motions of it in us.

IV. Original sin not only dwells, but it reigns in all unregenerate sinners. As it reigns in them, the jurisdiction is so great, which it bears in their souls, that it is called a law. Rom. viii. 2. *The law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law of sin and death.* It may be laid in what sense is sin in us called a law?

I answer ; it is called a law not properly, but improperly : it is not called a law, properly, because a law prescribes the rule of our obedience ; but sin, which is a privation of all rectitude, and the violation of a perfect rule, cannot properly be a law : besides righteousness is essential to a law, for unjust laws are but impositions of tyranny and violence. The sin of our nature is called a law improperly, and it bears some allusion to a law, in two things.

1. A law teaches us what the good is that we must do ; and it may be said that original sin teaches men how to contrive and find out many ways of doing evil. It is difficult to instil the bare notion of good principles into children ; but they can sin without any to tutor or instruct them : sin within teaches them to break the law of God. All children by nature are like the earth, which must have labour and cultivation before it brings forth good fruit ; but of itself it brings forth thorns, briars, and all noxious, poisonous weeds.

2. A law commands and governs. The formal reason of a law consists in government : counsels and admonitions direct, but in a law there must be power, to force the doing of that which is commanded. When a sinner is under the reign of that sin which dwells in him, he then thinks, speaks, and acts, as sin commands him. There is a principle of grace in believers, which is the law

of the spirit of life, which carries them out to all that is good : they must pray, meditate, mortify sin, vindicate the ways of God, and reprove wicked practices ; but the law of sin, which is in unregenerate sinners, instigates them to all evil. When the law of sin prevails over men, it does two things.

(1.) It carries them with a precipitate motion into a flood of sensuality. The sin of their nature works in them, as the Devils did in the herd of swine, which they hurried with violence into the sea. When original sin reigns in men, and works in them as a law, there is nothing that will stop them in their sinful course : they will run to sin through the law without, through conscience within, through all reproofs and counsels, through a large list of armed curses, and through legions of terrible judgments, when they are not only threaten'd but executed.

(2.) It fills them with contrary motions, which greatly distract and torment them. They have no trouble for their sins, but they have often, in this life, great trouble and torment by and from them ; and therefore they are compared to the troubled sea, Isai. lvii. 20. *The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* As the winds blow from all quarters upon the waters of the sea, so there are various lusts, which, like contrary winds, strive in the hearts of sinners, and make them

as the sea, when it is under the most violent agitation. As the sea is toss'd by stormy winds, and throws up miry foam, so are unregenerate sinners carried hither and thither, this way and that way, by their raging lusts: when there is nothing without to disquiet or disturb them, they can have no rest, because they have many lusts within to imbrol their spirits, and to destroy their quiet.

IV. *Of the great malignity and evil of original sin.*

I come now to shew the great malignity and evil of the sin of our nature, as it justly brings us under the displeasure of God. The sin of our nature, which is original sin, justly brings us under the displeasure of God, for three reasons.

I. The sin of our nature wholly defiles the frame of our souls, and puts us into the most direct contrariety to God. The sin of our nature is called a body, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* The sin of our nature is called a body, because of its great strength: it is so strong, that when unregenerate men have sinned ever so much, they can still sin more; while they have any natural spirits left, they are never weary of sinning. The strength of this sin is so great, that nothing

but the omnipotent arm of God's Spirit can master or throw it down. It is also called a body, because as a body is not one single part or member, but a composition or collection of many parts or members in one ; so the sin of our nature is not in one part of our bodies, or one faculty of our souls, but it is diffused through all the members of our bodies, and all the faculties of our souls. As the sin of our nature is diffused through all the members of our bodies, and all the faculties of our souls, it wholly defiles the frame of our souls, and puts us into the most direct contrariety to God.

1. The sin of our nature wholly defiles the frame of our souls : as it corrupts all men, so it depraves all that is in every man. The whole frame of a natural man is unclean, and when the whole frame is unclean, all the religious service which he offers up to God is unclean : the uncleanness of his nature renders the service which he performs to God unclean. All that a man does in the worship of God, while he is in a state of nature, is unclean, because it is from his unclean nature ; he has either wrong conceptions of God in it, or false and mistaken apprehensions of what he does, or selfish motives and ends in the doing of it : no pure prayers, no spiritual heavenly desires, no sincere love, and no unfeigned obedience, can come from him, when he is under the uncleanness of his corrupt

corrupt nature : when his actions are materially good, he sins in them, because his nature is corrupt, and his frame is wholly unclean.

2. The sin of our nature puts us into the most direct contrariety to God, who is a God of infinite purity. The holiness of God is that which gives the highest lustre to all his attributes, and therefore in the prophet's vision the holiness of God was what the angels extoll'd and celebrated, Isai. vi. 3. *One Seraph cried to another and said, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* The infinite holiness of God is what the angels in heaven admire, and it is what the saints on earth most earnestly desire to resemble, because it is the beauty of his nature. If the infinite holiness of God be the beauty of all his perfections, then the sin of our nature, as it puts us into a direct contrariety to God, is our highest deformity, and our greatest misery : it is our highest deformity, as it makes us contrary to the infinite holiness of God, which is the perfection of all beauty : it is our greatest misery, as it unfits us for communion with God : we can have no communion with him, when we are contrary to him, and contrary to him in our nature, which is more than a contrariety to him in our actions. As the man, who was ceremonially unclean, was not to come into the tabernacle, or temple, under the law, so

every unregenerate sinner, who is not wash'd from the uncleanness of his nature, must be banish'd and excluded from the glorious presence of God for ever. This will complete his misery, and carry it to the highest pitch. As it will be the perfection of a believer's happiness, that he shall be for ever with the Lord ; so on the contrary, it will be the highest strain of a sinner's misery, that he shall be for ever separated from the Lord.

II. The sin of our nature is the standing hindrance of all good. It is said to be the sin which easily besets us, Heb. xii. 1. *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does easily beset us.* The author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* exhorts believers to do two things, for the finishing of their course, *viz.* to lay aside every weight, which is every actual sin ; and to lay aside the sin which so easily besets them, or so tenaciously adheres to them ; this is the sin of our nature. The sin of our nature with great readiness and facility entangles and ensnares us.

1. This sin stops and stifles all motions to good in unregenerate sinners : it is as a wall run cross a street, to bar them up from taking one step in the way to heaven. It is this sin that makes them deaf to the external calls of the word : they hearken to the reasonings of this sin within, and therefore they stop their ears to the call of God in his word without. They either do not hear the call of

of God in his word, when they are under the sound of it, or they do not consider it, when they have heard it.

2. It weakens, thwarts, and opposes all good motions in believers, Rom. vii. 21. *When I would do good, evil is present with me.* Believers find that corruption within never stirs and works more strongly in them, than when they would do good, either in acting faith on Christ in the promises, or in expressing their love to God, in obeying his commandments, or in the exercise of patience under afflictions. It is from original sin, that believers are vigorous in their motion about the matters of the world, when they are slack and slow in God's work : they can rack their thoughts about secular affairs, but it wearies them to spend one hour in meditating on heavenly things : they can hear large discourses about civil states and kingdoms, without being drowsy, but a sleepy temper soon comes upon them in hearing a sermon, which makes known and declares the glorious mysteries of redemption : if it were not for the sin of our nature, all acts of obedience would be as delightful to us, as acts of sin are to wicked men, and we should be under no temptation from any thing in our selves, and from our own frame, to bow down from God to the creatures, but we should be always ascending from the creatures to the living God.

III. The sin of our nature is the cause of all evil, as it is the spring of all other sins. Original sin has its principal seat in the heart, and Christ has informed us what comes out of the heart, Matt. xv. 29. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* The sin of our nature is the bitter root which bears all the evil fruit, that is in the whole world. Altho' this sin is not actual, yet it is a most active sin, because all sorts of sins, whether new or old, come from it. It is the dunghil from which all the sinful actions of our lives, like so many poisonous serpents, derive their life and strength : it is the forge from whence the sparks of raging lust continually rise up. All other sins are in this sin, as the sap of a tree is in the root, and as the streams are in the fountain. As a bad cause is worse than all the evil effects which are produced by it ; so there is more evil in the sin of our nature, than there is in all the actual sins which are committed by the worst men, as it is the immediate cause of all sin. This makes it most hateful to God. Acts of sin are odious to God, but much more the sin of our nature which is the great mass of all iniquity. It is because of the provocation which this sin gives to God, that children come under his displeasure, as soon as they are born, and deserve condemnation : as they are born children of wrath,

wrath, so when they die in their infancy, they must perish for ever, if God's electing love and Christ's redeeming blood come not in for their relief and salvation. The flood swept away infants, as well as others, and all that were destroy'd by it are call'd *the world of the ungodly*, 2 Pet. ii. 5. *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, where there were many infants, are said to suffer *the vengeance of eternal fire*, Jude vii. If the infants in *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* had been righteous, they would have been comprehended in *Abraham's* plea. If the sin of our nature, which is original sin, wholly defiles our frame, and puts us into the most direct contrariety to the infinite purity of God; if it is the standing hindrance of all good, and if it is the cause of all evil, as it is the spring of all other sins; then we justly come under the displeasure of God, because of the sin of our nature.

V. *The application.*

I shall make some improvement, by way of application in three things.

I. If all persons, as they are born into the world, are full of sin, then this is the reason why the world is as one great sink of all wickedness. It is from the sin of our nature that men are prepared for all acts of deceit, injustice, cruelty and violence, and behave themselves to one another, more like devils

devils than creatures of the same species : it is this sin that turns the nations of the world either into brothel houses for impurity, or into fields of blood : it is this sin that makes oppressors and tyrants, who are the greatest thieves and murderers, to pass with *Adam's* miserable deluded race as sacred persons, who have a commission from God to destroy the lives of thousands of their fellow-creatures, and yet be accountable to no judicature here on earth.

The sin, which is in all of us by birth, is the fundamental cause why the world has so great a likeness to hell itself. When we ought to mourn because the world is so bad, yet if we consider the strength of original sin, which is in all persons, we may wonder it is not much worse ; and it would certainly be so, if God did not restrain the corruptions of mens hearts, even as he sets bounds to the waters of the sea, which they cannot pass.

II. If the whole frame and constitution of the souls of all men are corrupted by their birth, and if the sin of their nature hath so great a malignity in it, as to bring them under the displeasure of God; then we all ought to be sensible of the depravation of our nature, or of that sin which is in us.

I. We all may be press'd to get a sense of the depravation of our nature, or of original sin which is in us.

(1.) We

(1.) We ought to get a sense of the depravation of our nature, if we be yet under the power of sin, and in a state of unregeneracy, because sinners, in their unrenewed state, cannot be saved, while they are ignorant and insensible of the depravation and corruption of their nature. This may be proved by four things.

[1.] They can know nothing of their state and frame, and so cannot pass any right judgment upon themselves. As a man cannot tell what monsters are in the bottom of the sea, when he looks only upon the surface of the water ; so we cannot know what sins are in us, and how miserable we are because of sin, when we never look to that sin which dwells in us, and is the cause of all our other sins.

[2.] They can have no godly sorrow for sin, and consequently no true humiliation or repentance for sin : it is a godly sorrow for sin that works repentance to salvation, 2 Cor. vii. 10. *Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of.* There must be godly sorrow for sin, when we are humbled for it, and repent of it ; but we are never humbled for any actual sin, when we do not go as low as original sin, which is the bitter root and the cause of it. When a sinner truly repents, he is humbled for his actual sins, but he chiefly retracts the corruption of his nature, as it is the source of all

all sinful abominations. When sinners complain of other sins, and are ignorant of the sin of their nature, they have no more than a work of the law upon their natural conscience ; and when this wears off, they grow more wicked than they were before.

[3.] When sinners know nothing feelingly of the sin of their nature, their humiliation for actual sins under judgments, which are either impendent or executed, is only like *Ahab's* humiliation, which was a temporary, outside humiliation. We cannot leave any sin truly and really, unless we subdue it in the inner man. When sin is not subdued and slain in the inner man, it is like *Sampson's* hair, which being cut off soon grew again. This is the reason why many professors may appear, for a season, zealous christians, who afterwards throw off the form of religion, and persecute them who walk in the way which once they profess'd. As the life of the tree is in the root, and the tree dies not, 'till the root first withers, decays, and dies ; so the life of all sin is in the corruption of our nature, and as long as the corruption of our nature is not brought under the killing power of the Spirit of God, all sin will not only live in us, but it will reign and rule over us.

[4.] They are strangers to regeneration, or the new birth, without which no sinner can enter into the kingdom of heaven, John iii. 3. 5. *Except a man be born again, he can-not*

not see nor enter into the kingdom of God. When sinners have no sense of the sin of their nature, they either neglect the new birth as a thing wholly needless, or they mistake it.

1.) They neglect the new birth, as a thing wholly needless, and have no desires after it; when they believe nothing of the doctrine of original sin, regeneration, and all the saving operations of the Spirit are not only neglected by them, but are too often despised, derided and blasphemed by them, and they are encouraged to live and die in their sins, without any fear and trouble. This is so true, that it admits no doubt or question, and he that denies it, may as well dispute the reality of such things as are most evident to sense. If we look into all places of this nation, where sinners are taught to deny original sin, and try how many true converts we can find, who justify their faith by the holiness of their conversation, the number will be found very small.

2.) They mistake the new birth, when they do not deny it, or scoff at it, but come under some convictions of the necessity of it, they satisfy themselves with three things instead of it.

1.] A civil reformation. This is that of which many in our time greatly boast, and make it the ground of their hope and confidence, tho' it be so defective, that it is far from

from rising up to answer the dictates and rules of *Plato*, *Seneca*, *Plutarch*, and other Heathen Moralists. There was more refined and extensive morality in the heathen philosophers, than is to be met with in our modern free-willers, who so proudly proclaim the power of nature, and so loudly cry up the strength of their own resolutions. The free-willers in our time at best are but dwarfs, if compared to the heathen moralists.

2.] A temperate virtuous disposition. This is good in itself; but when we take up with it for regeneration, it is only a painted sepulchre, and a glistering dunghill. The outward conversation of a man may be blameless, when there is a treasure of sin in his heart.

3.] Gifts and abilities in religious exercises. Gifts may stand with the empire of sin in the heart. When grace does not change our nature, gifts are but like flowers set on a dead body.

When sinners are insensible of the sin of their nature, they either deny regeneration, or mistake it, and think it to be no more than either a civil reformation, or a temperate virtuous disposition, or gifts and abilities in religious exercises.

If when sinners are ignorant and insensible of the depravation of their nature, they cannot pass any right judgment on their state and frame, they can never be humbled for their

their sins, or repent of them, they cannot mortify their corruptions, but all sin reigns over them, and they live without the change of regenerating grace, which must pass upon all them who must enter into the kingdom of heaven; then it is absolutely necessary for all sinners, who are yet in their unconverted state, to get a sense of the depravation of their nature, or of the sin which is in them. If sinners were convinc'd of the defilement of their nature, and if they saw the monstrous alteration of the frame of their souls from what it was by creation, they would have no rest 'till they were stripp'd of their carnal frame, and were saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the holy ghost.

(2.) We ought to get a sense of the depravation of our nature, if we have believed in Christ, and are in a state of grace, for two reasons.

[1.] It is that which will humble us more and more before God. It is a sense of the depravation of our nature that will lay us low, and will bring us to loath our selves. It is the sight of original sin which makes the proud heart of a man to stoop before God, fills him with confusion, and covers him with an universal blush. We are loathsome to God before we are in Christ, and receive from him the gift of repentance, as well as the remission of our sins; but when we come to believe

believe and repent, and so to see the corruption of our nature, we then loath ourselves. When we are without a sense of the corruption of our nature we are never humbled for our sins before God ; but a sense of it is the only and the best antidote against spiritual pride, which is the worst pride.

[2.] There can be nothing of a new creation work in us, when we are without a sense of the corruption of our nature ; but it proves that we grow considerably in grace, and rise higher in our spiritual stature, when we have a deep sense of it. The strongest saints are always most sensible of the original corruption of their nature, and complain most of it, because where the spiritual life is strongest, there will be the quickest perception of sin which is contrary to it. I shall instance in *John Baptist*, and in the apostle *Paul*, for the proof of this, who were two of the tallest cedars in Christ's garden.

1.) *John Baptist* was greater than the prophets, Matth. xi. 9, 11. *What went ye out to see? a prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet: verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.* *John the Baptist* was the immediate harbinger of the redeemer of sinners ; he was a burning and a shining light ; he was sanctified in the womb, and he rejoiced at the approach of a Saviour before he saw the light,

yet he acknowledg'd the depravation of his nature, and humbled himself under the sense of it. *John* iii. 31. *He that is of the earth is earthly.* *John* speaks here of his depraved condition, as he was descended from the first *Adam*, in a way of ordinary generation: it is as if he had said, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, of whom I am now speaking to you, is above all, and no creature must be brought into competition with him; but as for me, I am from the earthly *Adam*, and was born into the world in a depraved state and condition. When *John* told the *Jews* this, that they might not think him to be more or better than he was, he had humbling and self-abasing thoughts of his state by nature.

2.) The apostle *Paul* complain'd of indwelling sin. None ever arrived to a higher degree in faith than the apostle *Paul*, and yet none could cry out more of the sin which was in him, *Rom.* vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!* The apostle never complain'd of his afflictions, which were both many, and of various sorts, but he groaned under the burden of original sin, and cried out for deliverance from it.

If we would be humbled more and more before God, and be preserved from spiritual pride, which is the worst pride, and if we would be of them who grow in grace, and

rise higher in their spiritual stature, then let us get a sense of the corruption of our nature.

2. I shall shew, how we may get a sense of the depravation of our nature. It is only by the Spirit that unregenerate sinners are brought to have a sense of it, and that believers get a deeper sense of it. As Christ came to cure the wounds of our depraved nature, so the Spirit came to convince us of the impurity of it. The Spirit reproves for sin, or convinces of it. John xvi. 8. *When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin.* The Spirit convinces of all sin, and when he comes as a reprobator, he convinces of original sin : he digs to the root of sin by conviction, that he may strike at the root of it in regeneration ; he shews us the corruption of our nature, that he may cleanse us from it : if he begins in conviction with actual sins, he traces them up to original sin, which is their spring-head.

It may be asked, what is it the Spirit does, when he brings us either to have a sense of sin, if we be yet in our unregenerate state, or to come under a deeper sense of it, if we have believed in Christ ? I answer ; he does three things.

(1.) The Spirit applies the law to our conscience in its purity and perfection. The apostle *Paul* knew nothing of the sin of his nature, when he was ignorant of the holiness of

of the law. Rom. vii. 9. *I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin reviv'd, and I died.* When strong convictions from the law, in the hand of the Spirit, broke into the conscience of the apostle, he then felt the burthen of original sin, as well as of his actual sins, and saw the insignificance of his own righteousness.

(2.) The Spirit shews us the corruption of our nature, not by a glimmering, but a clear light, and brings our hearts under a powerful impression of it, as it is the seminary of all sin. The Spirit convinces us that we are fallen, and he sets before us heaven in its glory, from whence we fell, and hell in its misery, into which we fell.

(3.) When the Spirit works in us a sense of the sin of our nature, it is either that we may come to Christ, if we are yet far from him, or that we may see a greater need of Christ, if we have fled to him. When the Spirit convinces us of the imputation of *Adam's* sin, and of the corruption of our nature, it is to lay us under the greatest necessity of believing in Christ; if the Spirit did not this, he would do nothing to purpose. When we think there is any good in us we are apt to depend on it, and stand at a distance from Christ; but when the Spirit shews us the running sore of our corrupt nature, and the overflowings of it, we then with open arms fly to Christ.

III. If sin dwells in all believers, when it reigns over all who are in a state of unregeneracy, then this is the foundation and cause of that standing combat and contest, which is between the flesh and spirit, sin and grace, in all believers while they are in this life. All believers find a law in their members, crossing and contradicting the law of the mind, Rom. vii. 22, 23. *I delight in the law of God, after the inward man ; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of the mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.* The conflict which is in a believer between the law of the members and the law of the mind, is what follows the regenerating and renewing work of the Spirit in his soul. When the Spirit of God regenerates and renews a sinner, he plants a vital active principle of grace in his heart, and this vital active principle of grace, which is planted in him, cannot but oppose sin, which dwells in him. The change which the Spirit makes in a believer is universal, and in every faculty ; but it is not perfect in its degrees in any faculty, and because of its imperfection, there is a perpetual contest in this life, between the grace of a believer and the corruption which remains in him. As there is a real standing combat between in-dwelling sin and implanted grace, in all saints here on earth, so there is a seeming, partial, counterfeit

counterfeit combat between reigning corruptions and the work of the law, in the natural conscience of temporary professors, who are never converted. It is a matter of the greatest consequence to be able to know how to distinguish the one from the other, that so we may neither take ourselves to be true believers, when we are not, nor, on the contrary, censure ourselves as hypocrites, when we are sound christians.

It may be said, how may we know the war or combat which is between in-dwelling sin and grace in believers, from that combat which is between reigning corruptions and legal convictions, in formal outside professors, who never come under the new birth? I answer, we may know the specific difference, which is between the combat in believers, and that which is in hypocrites, by five things.

1. The difference between the combat which is in true believers, and the combat which is in temporary unconverted professors, is in the principle and root. The contest which is in believers is from the renovation of their nature, which is the image of God restored in their souls. When sinners are regenerated, all things are made new in their inward frame, and hereupon there arises throughout their whole souls a resistance to all sin, and a contest with it; but the trouble which unregenerate persons have

for sin is only from common illuminations breaking into their guilty conscience, which disturb, but never renew it : the jarring or commotion, which is in their souls, is not from any change which is made upon them, but from some thunder-claps of wrath, which terrify and torment their conscience.

2. The difference between the combat which is in true believers, and in temporary professors, is in the motives of the one and of the other. The opposition to all sin, which is in believers, is upon pure spiritual motives and considerations, as the hatred of sin, love to Christ, delight in God, and from a desire of a greater conformity to his holy law ; but the contest which is in temporary professors, between their light and their strong imperious lusts, is not from any hatred of sin, or love to God, or his law, but merely from the terror of conscience, and the fear of hell.

3. The difference between the combat in true believers, and temporary professors, is in the duration of time. The combat which is between in-dwelling sin and grace, in believers, is always, and is kept up and maintain'd 'till death puts a period to it. When the grace of God is once receiv'd, it can never be lost ; but because a believer is partly spiritual, and partly carnal, there cannot but be a perpetual contest between corruption and grace in him : the reason is this ; there can not

not possibly be any concord, or agreement, between grace and corruption. The contest between sin and grace in a believer is never over, in this world; but all the contests which are in the souls of unregenerate men, between their corruptions, and the light and convictions of their natural consciences, are short and transient: when the fears of death and of other threatened dangers are removed, they grow as carelessly secure, and presumptuous in their sins as ever, because the strong man still keeps the house.

4. The difference between the combat in true believers, and hypocritical professors, is in the manner and method of it. The combat which is in unregenerate sinners, is in two distinct faculties of the soul; as for instance, the light which is in their minds, may condemn the impure and brutal lusts which predominate in their appetites and affections, and the fear of God's justice which is in their conscience, may condemn the rebellion, which is in their wills. There was a great struggle in *Balaam*, but it was between the convictions of his conscience, and the inordinacy of his desires after the unlawful gain of the world: The light which was in his conscience made him wish, with great vehemence, that he might die the death of the righteous. Numb. xxiii. 10. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!* The light which was in *Balaam's* understanding, made

him pathetically wish for the death of the righteous; but his covetousness would not permit him to refuse the wages of unrighteousness, 2 Pet. ii. 15. Balaam *the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.* The contest in *Balaam*, was between the light of his understanding, and the covetous and craving desires, which were in his affections, after the world. As it was in *Balaam*, so the contest which is in unregenerate sinners, is always between two distinct faculties of their souls; but the combat which is between sin and grace, in believers, as it is in all their faculties, so it is in the same faculty. The understanding is against the understanding, the conscience is against the conscience, the will is against the will, and the appetite is against the appetite. A believer cannot judge two contraries to be true at once, and he cannot will or desire two objects of contrary qualities, with the same strength of affection; but so far as his understanding is enlightened, it goes against his understanding, as it is yet blind; so far as his will is sanctified, it resists and does not concur with his will, as it is corrupt; and so far as his appetite, and affections, are renewed, they do not agree with his appetite, and affections, as they are carnal.

5. The difference between the combat which is in true believers, and temporary professors, is in the different way of maintaining the contest.

contest. When unregenerate sinners fall out with their corruptions, and have a war with them, they carry on the contest in their own strength; this is the reason why their contending with sin is so far from being successful, that it ends in a close union between sin and them; but the combat which believers have, with the sin which is in them, is begun and prosecuted in the strength of Christ alone, till their contest with sin be crown'd with a complete conquest; believers maintain a war against in-dwelling sin, only by the power of Christ; and tho' they be often much worsted by sin, yet they renew the combat, and never quit it, till with the apostle *Paul* they come to say, with a triumphant joy, we thank God who has perfectly delivered us from the body of sin, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our own tears, were they to swell to many rivers, could never wash us from our guilt, and our own endeavours will never crucify sin that dwells in us; but it is the blood of Christ only, that can do the first, and it is the Spirit of Christ only, that can do the second: it is Christ that, by the shedding of his blood, delivers us from the wrath to come; and it is he only that, by his Spirit, can weaken original sin in us daily, more and more, till it shall not have any abode in us.

If we try our selves, we may know the truth of our grace, and avoid the danger

ger of hypocrisy: if we have a contest with in-dwelling sin, from the principle of a renewed nature, if we contend with it upon pure heavenly motives, if our combat be perpetual, and repeated as often as it is interrupted, if it be in all the faculties of our souls, and in the same faculty, and if we begin and carry it on only in the strength of Christ; then there is a combat in our souls between the flesh and spirit, sin and grace, which will conclude in our complete victory over in-dwelling sin, when all our present groans and complaints, under the weight and burden of original sin, shall be turned into loud acclamations of eternal joy.





OF THE
SINFULNESS
OF THE
Thoughts of Men
IN THEIR
FALLEN STATE.





26



O F
S I N F U L T H O U G H T S.



GEN. vi. 5.

Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil, continually.



THE corruption of our nature, or original sin (of which I have spoke largely) discovers itself in nothing more, than in the sinfulness of our thoughts, which are the first-born of our souls, and should be the beginning of our strength. Our thoughts, which first rise up in our immortal spirits, are all sinful, while we are in our depraved state;

142 OF SINFUL THOUGHTS.

state; and when all our thoughts are so, what can follow, but the greatest irregularity and exorbitance in our desires, universal selfishness in our purposes and resolutions, and a constant opposition, and contradiction to the revealed will of God in all the actions of our lives?

The wickedness of the old world, which was so great, and which so highly offended God, that he resolved to destroy all men, and whatsoever was serviceable to such ungrateful rebels and apostates, as they were, proceeded wholly, from the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart. The fundamental cause and spring of all the sin which provoked God to sweep away *Adam's* revolting posterity, by a general deluge, and not to spare them any longer, was this, every imagination of the thoughts of mens hearts was only evil, continually.

There are two things in the words which I shall explain.

I. I shall shew what is meant by the imagination. The imagination, taken properly, is the inward material sense, which God has created in every man, for holding up a communication or intercourse between his soul and his bodily senses, by receiving into itself the impression of things, and then conveying them to the understanding. The imagination is the inward material sense, which God has created in the soul of every man:

man: It is seated within him, and is superior to all his external senses, and yet it is inferior to all the rational faculties of his soul, because it is not of a spiritual nature: It maintains a correspondence, and mutual sympathy, between the soul and body: it is by the intervention and help of it, that the body communicates to the soul a sense of its strength or weakness, ease or pain, rest or labour: it is by the instrumentality of it, that the soul works upon the body: It receives into itself the impression of things, and conveys them unto the understanding; and by doing this, it is subservient to reason, for the acquiring not only all natural knowledge, but all the speculative notional knowledge, which unregenerate men have of gospel truths. No sooner is any thing felt, or sounded in the ear, or presented to the eye, but the imagination represents some image of it to the understanding, that it may judge of it. This is what is meant by the imagination, if it be properly taken.

II. I shall shew what is to be understood by the imagination of the thoughts of the heart. By the imagination of the thoughts of the heart we are to understand, every thing which rises up, and is first formed in a man's thoughts. Thoughts are the prime motions of the soul, and shoot forth from the mind as branches from a tree. We cannot but have a sense and perception of our thoughts,

144 OF SINFUL THOUGHTS.

as they spring up within us, and yet we can give but a lame description of their formation in us. The imagination of the thoughts of the heart, is what the mind frames, within itself, by thinking, or what is first formed, and moves in our souls. As all men are now in a fallen state, every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts is sinful.

The doctrinal proposition which I shall raise from the words is this;

The thoughts of every man, in his fallen state, are naturally, and altogether sinful.

In speaking to this doctrinal truth, I shall do four things.

I. I shall prove, that the thoughts of every man, in his fallen state, are naturally and altogether sinful.

II. I shall shew, what some of the sinful thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are.

III. I shall demonstrate the aggravation of the sinfulness of the thoughts of men, in their fallen state, or, I shall endeavour to make it evident, that their thoughts are not barely sinful, but exceeding sinful.

IV. I shall make application.

I. *The*

I. *The thoughts of all men, in their fallen state, proved to be sinful.*

I shall, in the first place, prove, that the thoughts of every man, in his fallen state, are naturally and altogether sinful.

I. I shall prove, that the thoughts of every man, in his fallen state, are naturally sinful. When I say they are naturally sinful, I mean, that they are sinful, as they spring up within a man, and are the fruits and products of his depraved nature.

1. It may be proved from Scripture-testimony, that the thoughts of every man, in his fallen state, are naturally sinful. The thoughts of every man are sinful, from his youth. Gen. viii. 21. *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;* or it is evil from his childhood. The imagination of man's heart is evil, from the first moment of the complete union of his soul and body. As a serpent has poison in it, before it stings, so we have the root and principle of all evil thoughts in us, before we begin to think. The mind of every man, which is his faculty of cogitation, is defiled. Titus i. 15. *Their mind and conscience is defiled.* There is a natural and innate defilement in the mind, and when the mind, which is our thinking faculty, is polluted and defiled, all our thoughts must be sinful. The mind of every man, which is

his thinking faculty, is not only defiled, but it is full of the strongest aversion to God. It is said not barely to be an enemy to God, but to be enmity against God. Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* The mind is the superior faculty of the soul, that directs, and has a great influence to command, and govern all the other faculties; but as the mind is carnal, it is enmity against God, and never yields to the scepter of his government, till it be overcome by the power of his almighty arm. If the mind of every man, which is his thinking faculty, be not only defiled, but full of aversion and enmity against God; then all the thoughts, which rise and come from it must be sinful, because they cannot but be suitable to the fountain and spring from whence they come.

2. It may be proved, that the thoughts of every man, in his fallen state, are naturally sinful, from the experience of every one, who makes any reflections on the propensity of his natural frame. Let a man consider the pulse of his thoughts, or examine what is the motion which is natural to them, and then let him declare whether he can, with as much freedom and forwardness, think on the things which are superlatively good, as he can think on the things which are either vain, or most sinful; if he says he can do the first, with as much facility, as he can do the second,

cond, he knows nothing of his own frame, and is the greatest stranger to his own heart. If there were not a propensity in our corrupt nature to all evil thoughts, and only to evil thoughts, then we should be far more disposed to good thoughts, than to thoughts which are evil; because there is a transcendent beauty and glory in spiritual, heavenly objects, to draw out and deserve our thoughts, when on the contrary, there is a deformity in all sin, and in all sinful objects, which is more than sufficient to turn our thoughts from them, with hatred and detestation. If there were not a natural depravation in our thinking faculty, it would be much more easy to have good thoughts, than to have evil thoughts; but all believers can witness to the truth of this, that it is difficult for them to have good thoughts, when at the same time they find a great inclination in themselves to think on things, which are either unseasonable and insignificant, or vain and unprofitable, or hurtful and sinful. It is with delight, that our hearts can frame thoughts, which are sinful, because the torrent of our corrupt nature runs towards them; but when we endeavour and strive to think on things which are pure and spiritual, heavenly and eternal, most desirable and amiable, our thoughts are disorderly, fleeting, unsettled, and have no better connection than ropes of sand. It is the burden of a believer, that

when he should have the best thoughts, he has the worst, and that when he should make the nearest and closest approach to God, thro' a Mediator, and attend on him with a composed frame, his thoughts are distracted, and give him the greatest disturbance.

II. I shall prove, that the thoughts of every man, in his fallen state, are altogether sinful. They are not only naturally sinful, but they are altogether sinful. The words of the text prove that they are altogether sinful; they are only evil; and they are continually evil.

1. The thoughts of every man, in his fallen state, are only evil. Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil. All the thoughts of man, in his fallen state, are only evil, or they have an extremity of evil in them; they have nothing but sin in them; they are all sinful, without the least mixture of good thoughts. The mind of a sinner shapes and forms many thousands of various thoughts, which move after different objects, for various ends, and there is not one of them but what is sinful.

2. They are continually, or constantly, evil. Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil, and it is constantly evil. There is a constancy of evil in the thoughts of man, in his fallen state: there is no interval of thinking, wherein evil thoughts are not always rolling in the mind of unregenerate

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rate sinners. The souls of sinners are as full of thoughts, as the sea is of water, and as the air is of atoms, and they are all evil, and continually evil.

II. *Of the various kinds of sinful thoughts.*

I shall now proceed to shew, what some of the sinful thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are. As all their thoughts are sinful, so they are numberless, and when they are without number, it is not possible for us to sum them up. That I may shew what some of the sinful thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are, I shall reduce them to five sorts, *viz.* Self-applauding thoughts, presumptuous thoughts, unbelieving and despairing thoughts, thoughts which most highly misrepresent God, and thoughts which are atheistical, and rise up to a denial of God.

I. The thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are self-applauding thoughts. The worst pride is rooted in the nature of fallen man, and therefore it is natural for him to be in love with his own supposed perfections, and acquisitions. We are commanded not to think of our selves, above what we ought to think. Rom. xii. 3. *I say, through the grace given to me, to every man, that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.* How is it that a man ought to think of himself, that so he may not think

150 OF SINFUL THOUGHTS.

more highly of himself, than he ought ? I answer : he ought to think, that he is lighter than vanity, that he is less than nothing, that he is covered naturally with the most loathsome deformity, that he is contrary to the infinite holiness of God, which is the perfection of all beauty, that his just desert is the extremity of eternal misery, and that it is from the rich sovereign grace of God, through Jesus Christ, that he differs from the greatest sinners, and has any hope of escaping the wrath to come, and of getting to heaven. It is according to this self-abasing standard, that every man ought to think of himself ; but many thousands to one think the contrary. Few think so meanly and lowly of themselves as they ought to think, and none ever do it, without a light from heaven, to discover to them the greatness of their sins, and the depth of their misery ; but all persons, in their fallen state, think of themselves above and contrary to what they ought to think, which is the greatest blemish of their corrupt nature. When sinners come under a superficial and external reformation, and have forsaken gross enormities, and immoral practices, then the head of all corruption rises to a great height in them, and they are filled with self-applauding thoughts, and self-exalting speculations, of their own worth, goodness, and personal inherent righteousness : as they compare themselves with other men, who are worse in the esteem of the

OF SINFUL THOUGHTS. 151

the world than they, so they despise others, and commend themselves. Thus did the pharisee in the parable. Luke xviii. 11, 12.
The pharisee stood, and prayed with himself, God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tythes of all that I possess. The pharisee took not all the praise of his good works to himself, but gave a part to God. *God I thank thee.* He acknowledged it was from God, that he was not as bad as others. It is evident from this, that it does not excuse men from the charge of seeking justification by their own righteousness, when they ascribe it to their own good works, tho' they acknowledge that all their good works are done in the strength of God's grace. The pharisee contemned other men, when he should have pitied them : *I am not as other men are.* He boasted of his own goodness, which was either negative, or consisted only in external acts, but not in things which pertain'd to the right government of the heart. *I fast twice in the week, I give tythes of all that I possess.* The pharisaic temper, which Christ describes, prevails in all who give way to self-applauding thoughts, and who are swell'd with the opinion of their own righteousness. As thick vapours in the air, in a misty morning, make things appear much bigger than they are; so it is because of the dark under-

standing, which is in all self-applauding sinners, that they think they are strong, when they are weak, righteous, when they are guilty, and that they have need of nothing, when they want all things. When sinners abound in self-applauding thoughts, three things follow.

1. They are under the reigning power of spiritual pride, which is the very sin which brought condemnation on the fallen angels, and threw them down into the greatest abyss of misery. Self-applauding thoughts were the foundation of the fall of the apostate angels. When the once glorious stars of the morning viewed their natural excellencies, they thought they were self-sufficient, and might find blessedness in their own nature, as God did in his nature: by self-applauding thoughts, they were led, to make themselves their own end, and to expect happiness in themselves, and so they fell.

2. Self-applauding thoughts separate between sinners and Christ, and keep them from enquiring after a Saviour. If sinners were sensible, that they have destroyed the end of their creation, that they have yielded themselves subjects to Satan, that they are condemn'd by the law, that they have drawn down upon themselves the infinite displeasure of God, and that they are under a weight of guilt, which will (if not taken off by the arm of Christ) sink them down into hell, they would immediately, and with the greatest vehemence, cry out for a redeemer.

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3. Self-applauding thoughts put sinners upon trusting to their own righteousness, for justification before God. As this is the fruit of the grossest ignorance, so it is the effect of the worst folly.

(1.) It is the fruit of the grossest ignorance. When sinners trust in their own righteousness, for justification before God, they are ignorant of themselves, and they know nothing of the perfection of God's justice, the infinite purity of his holiness, the extent of the law, in its precepts, and the dreadful severity of it in its curses.

(2.) It is the effect of the worst folly. What folly is it, to substitute our own tears in the room of Christ's blood, when our tears are but as a drop, to the sea of our guilt? What folly is it to join our petitions with Christ's intercession, when our most fervent prayers are but as the faint breath of a child, to the storms of our provocations? What folly is it, to imagine that a few imperfect duties can expiate the guilt of a multitude of sins, when all our own righteousness is only a cypher, if compared to the many talents of our transgressions? It is not by thousands of duties, that we can make a compensation to God for one sin. The evil of sin is so great, that nothing but the blood of Christ, who is God as well as man, can satisfy for it; and our own righteousness is so defective, that it needs a covering for its imperfections, before the holiness of God.

II. The thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are presumptuous thoughts. They promise themselves peace, in the way of sin and think themselves safe, when they are running headlong to destruction. *Moses* gives a lively description of the carriage of a stubborn, refractory, rebellious wretch, who acted according to his presumptuous thoughts. Deut. xxix. 19. *And if it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, tho' I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.* We may remark in the sinner here described: how he was not moved by the threatenings of God, but slighted them, when they were sounded in his ears. Presumptuous sinners can hear, without any fear, the threatenings of God's word, which will be fulfilled in their everlasting punishment. He was filled with unreasonable expectations; when God's curse was thundered out against him, he bless'd himself and said in his heart, *I shall have peace.* When he believed nothing of what God threatened, he gave credit to all that his imagination dictated to him. Presumptuous sinners are false prophets, which never prophesy evil, but always good to themselves: It is with the greatest confidence that they promise themselves peace, when all trouble is coming upon them. Let God by his ministers speak what he will, they fear nothing, but are ready to think

think that threatened men live longest, and that hard words break no bones. When the sinner here described, promised himself peace, he resolved to take a boundless liberty in sin. *I shall have peace, tho' I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.* Drunkenness may here be understood, either of excessive drinking: when some are thirsty, they never think they have drunk enough, till they have drown'd all their sense and reason in a flood of drunkenness. Or it may be meant of the eager pursuit of sin. The desire is the thirst of the soul. As the godly man hungers and thirsts after righteousness, so the ungodly man thirsts after wickedness, and when he does what he thirsts after, he then adds drunkenness to his thirst. A presumptuous sinner promises himself peace, when he proceeds from sinful desires to the height of sinful actions: he strengthens himself in a presumptuous confidence, that when he commits more sin, God will forbear to punish him, and will be favourable to him.

One chief reason, why the ministration of the word has no more success upon sinners, who hear it, is because they entertain a presumptuous hope that they are in a safe condition, and out of all danger. It may be said, how come they to be settled in this false hope? I answer: they separate God's justice from his mercy: they do not think God will be just,

to punish their sins ; but they presume he will be merciful to save them, tho' they live most wickedly : when they own Christ to be a Saviour, they never consider that he came to purify and sanctify his people, as well as to justify them. When sinners promise themselves security in a course of sin, their presumptuous thoughts shall be turned into distracting and tormenting thoughts, when God comes to throw down their foundation of sand, and to execute upon them his threatened vengeance. God will do by them, as he said he would do by the presumptuous sinner mentioned by *Moses*, ver. 20. *The Lord will not spare, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall be upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.*

III. The thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are unbelieving and despairing thoughts.

1. It is because of the unbelieving thoughts of sinners, that they run from God, and believe nothing of the truth of his promises. They run from God: *Adam's* running from God after he fell, is hereditary to them all. When they should run from their sins to God, they add to their sins by running from him. And they believe nothing of the truth of God's promises. God has confirmed the truth of his promises by his oath, and sealed

sealed them by the blood of his Son; but all sinners do not more obstinately refuse the yoke of God's commandments, than they perversely raise cavils and objections, against the truth of God's promises, and so shut themselves more closely up in the prison of unbelief. Nay, even believers have many unbelieving thoughts, about the truth of God's promises.

(1.) It is from their unbelieving thoughts of God's promises, that the remembrance of God is sometimes a trouble to them. Psalm lxxvii. 3. *I remembred God and was troubled.* There was, as it were, a sound within him, which proceeded from extraordinary trouble. It is a sorrowful time with a believer, when the remembrance of God, which is the only thing that can comfort him, becomes a trouble to him.

(2.) It is from their unbelieving thoughts of God's promises, that they misinterpret the intention and design of God in his providences towards them. When God afflicts them, that they may be humbled for their sins, and be brought to search and try themselves, they often take his corrections to be punishments, his reproofs to be fruits of his displeasure, and his contending with them, in a fatherly way, to be a final rejection of them.

(3.) It is from their unbelieving thoughts of the truth of God's promises, that they have many

many shiverings, upon imaginary fears and self-afflicting supposals, and that they disturb themselves by antedating improbable griefs and sorrows. When *David* took his eye off from God's promise, and beheld the black aspect of present providences, he then said in his heart, *I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul*, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.

2. It is because of the despairing thoughts which sinners have of the mercy of God, that they deny it to be sufficient to forgive their sins. When they do not think God to be all mercy, and to have no justice to punish them, they, on the contrary, fear that he is all justice, and has no mercy to forgive their sins: when they have not elevations in their spirits upon false imaginary hopes, and when they have not forgot that God is terrible in majesty, they are overwhelmed with despairing thoughts, and do not believe that God is rich in mercy. As when God calls upon men to obey his will, they say in their hearts, that the duties, which he requires of them, are too many to be done, and the burdens, which he lays upon them, are too heavy to be born; so when God calls upon sinners to turn to him, they think they are too guilty to be forgiven, and too filthy to be washed. When sinners are awakened, to see how they have provoked God, and when their sins stare them in the face, they think that God will never forgive their sins; because if their fel-

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low creatures had offended them, as they have offended God, they could never be reconciled to them, and so they fall into despair. They measure God's merciful disposition, by their own narrow spirit, and think that God is as backward to remit their sins, as they are to pass by wrongs done against themselves: when they judge the crimes of their neighbours too great for them to pass by, they imagine their own sins are too many for God to forgive, because they conclude, that God's mercy does not rise above their low standard. God has made a gracious promise to prevent our despairing thoughts of his mercy. Isa. Iv. 7, 8, 9. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon: for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* It is as if God had said, your thoughts are as much below my mercy, as your ways are contrary to my holiness: you must not only cease from doing what I have forbid, but you must cease from doubting what I have promised. Your disobedience, in committing sin, did not dis honour me so much, as your unbelief does, in doubting that I will forgive your sins.

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We shall not fear to sin till we believe that God is infinitely holy above us ; and we cannot believe that God will forgive our sins, till we believe that, in Christ, he is infinitely merciful, above what we can apprehend.

IV. The thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are thoughts which most highly misrepresent and reproach God. It is said, that God is not in all the thoughts of a wicked man. Psal. x. 4. *God is not in all his thoughts.* The meaning is this, the wicked man has no thoughts of God, which are according to the excellence of his divine nature : All the thoughts which he hath of God, are so far from being agreeable to his perfections, that they eclipse the glory of them. Unregenerate men think God will neglect his own honour for the sake of their lusts, and will abound in goodness towards them, that they may abound in sin. The heathens attributed the vices and lewd practices to their false Gods, in which they resolved to live themselves : the same thing, in effect, is done by many, who live under the light of the word ; they strip God of the perfection of his holiness, and represent him as a God that not only winks at their brutal impurities, but approves of them, when they lie in the deepest mire of sensuality : they cast God into such a form, or image, in their thoughts, as may encourage them in a bold course of sin. Psal. i. 21. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such*

an one as thy self. When sinners frame such thoughts of God as if he were like themselves, and were not angry at their sins, they from the aforesaid thoughts which they have of God derive a reputation to their greatest crimes, commit all wickedness with unbounded licentiousness, and cast off all fear, when they are hastening to the place where they shall have the sharpest torment, with despair, for ever. It is upon no better ground that they go, who, because God forgives sin, and justifies sinners freely, argue from thence, that all strict circumspect walking is legal; that there is no need for believers to mortify their corruptions, or to be troubled for their sins; and that God has as much complacence in them when they are tippling at a drunken club, as if they were praying in their families, or closets. If sinners do not lay aside such thoughts of God which encourage them in practices most injurious to his holiness, he will reckon with them in a fearful manner: he will reprove them, and set all their sins in order before their eyes; and when he has given them a distracting and a most terrifying vision of their sins, he will tear them to pieces when there is none to deliver them.

V. The thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are atheistical thoughts, or thoughts which rise up to a denial of God. When fallen man cannot find out what God is, he either thinks him to be what he is not, or

he thinks that he is not at all. Atheistical thoughts start up too often in the hearts of them upon whose souls God has feelingly moved and breathed ; but atheistical thoughts rest and abide in the hearts of fools, Ps. xiv. 1. *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.* This is the language which is in the heart of a fool, and it is repeated, Ps. liii. 1. When the fool does not openly speak out his denial of God, he secretly thinks it ; he wishes there were no God, and he hopes there is none. The atheist, who says in his heart there is no God, is most deservedly styled a fool, because the denial of a God is superlative folly.

1. The atheist says that in his heart, which is impossible to be proved. Every atheistical fool says that in his heart which all the sophists in the world can never prove. If there were one plausible specious argument to prove there is no God, then all men would be atheists in judgment, as most now are atheists in practice ; but when there is not one argument to prove that there is no God, there are many unanswerable arguments to prove that there is a God.

There is not one medium that the atheist can pitch upon, to prove that there is no God, but it may serve as a real proof that there is a God. The atheist denies God, when he may see the shadow of God round about him, and when there are as many arguments to confute

confute him, as there are creatures within the circuit of heaven and earth. God has left the prints of himself upon every creature ; the whole creation is as one great volume, and in turning over every leaf of it, we may read a lecture of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, Rom. i. 20. *The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.* In the frame of the world we may see that which goes beyond, and far exceeds, the wisdom and strength not only of all men, but of angels.

2. The hope of atheists is short-liv'd, because God sends his judgments as heralds to declare war against them, and to keep alive in their conscience the apprehensions of himself, as he is a judge to punish them : when they resolutely deny God, they are soon forced to fear, that there is a great and terrible God, who will avenge himself upon them.

3. The atheists which are among us contradict in their practice what they assert to be their opinion : they frequently imprecate damnation to themselves : is not this to acknowledge that God whom they deny ? from whence could that damnation come, which they liberally imprecate to themselves, if there were not a revenging God to inflict it ?

4. When atheists deny God, they set up some lust, as a God, in their hearts. For what purpose is it that they rack their wit to justify and vindicate their denial of a God? It is to serve some lust, which is as contrary to their own welfare, as it is reproachful to God. They strive to throw off the notions of that God who made them, and endeavour to persuade themselves that he is not, that they may leave off to be men, that they may oppose their own reasonable nature, that they may sink into the dregs of the greatest brutality, and that they may procure for themselves the worst slavery, and the severest torments.

5. All atheistical fools, who deny God, render themselves not only worse than brutes, but worse than the devils. The atheists do what they can to make this world worse than hell, because the devils and the damned in hell cannot doubt of the existence of God, in that they feel the strokes of his vindictive justice. Hell receives all atheists, but it soon proselytes them from their error. The devils are so far from being atheists, that they not only believe there is a God, but they tremble at that fulness of torment, which God has stored up for them, *James ii. 19. The devils also believe, and tremble.* The devils tempt men to atheism, but they cannot be guilty of it themselves: they rejoice in the sin and misery of atheists, but at the same time they know them to be stupid fools.

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If it be superlative folly for men to be atheists in their thoughts, and to say in their hearts, there is no God, then it is cause of bitter lamentation, that open profess'd atheists abound so much among us under the light of the gospel. Professed atheism was rare among the heathens. They who were branded as atheists among the heathens, were rather accounted so, than were so indeed; they were men commonly, who did not deny the being of God, but they derided the plurality and multiplicity of the senseless deities of the heathens, and discover'd the cheats and frauds of the impure idolatrous priests, who deluded the ignorant rabble. The men who were censur'd for being atheists among the heathens were generally men free from a popular phrensy; but we have many among us, who with a frontless confidence ridicule the word of God, mock at God's judgments, and deny their Creator to have a being, without whose goodness they could never have breathed, or had a tongue to speak themselves. This is a sin which we ought to bewail, and to pray that all guilty of it may repent, lest it bring upon the nation a sweeping deluge of extraordinary judgments.

III. *Of the aggravation of the sinfulness of the thoughts.*

166 OF SINFUL THOUGHTS.

I come now to demonstrate the aggravation of the sinfulness of the thoughts of men in their fallen state ; or I shall make it evident, that their thoughts are not barely sinful, but exceeding sinful. The sinfulness of the thoughts is aggravated by the multiplicity of them ; they are so many, that they cannot be reckon'd up, and when they are all sinful, how great must their sinfulness be ?

It may be demonstrated by three things, that the thoughts of men in their fallen state are not barely sinful, but exceeding sinful.

I. The thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are not barely sinful, but exceeding sinful, because it is by the imagination of their thoughts that the devil's temptations come to have a prevalence over them. The imagination of the thoughts, as it is the under-agent of the soul in all its operations, is the dunghill where the devil hatches his cockatrice's eggs : it is that in sinners with which the devil has chiefly to do, and by which he gets the victory over them. The devil can neither constrain the will of sinners, nor violently extort a consent from their judgments, nor put any force upon their affections, because no created finite spirit can work upon another created finite spirit, by way of a supreme regency and irresistible efficacy. The devil cannot draw unregenerate men to sin, unless they first yield to his temptations ; and yet he acts with so great power in them,

that they are said to be taken captive at his will, 2 Tim. ii. 26. *Who are taken captive by the devil at his will.* It may be said, if the devil cannot compel men to sin, how is it that he ensnares and takes them captive at his will, and makes them as forward to commit sin, as he can be to tempt them to it? I answer, he does it by the narrow view and observation which he takes of the imagination of their thoughts, and by ordering the assaults which he makes upon them accordingly.

1. It is by the narrow view and observation which the devil takes of the imagination of mens thoughts, that he gets the knowledge of their different constitutions, or comes to know whether they be choleric, or phlegmatic, melancholic, or sanguine. When the devil knows what mens natural constitutions, dispositions, and tempers are, we are not aware what he may then do (if permitted by God) to draw them to sin, and pull down destruction upon themselves: the complexion of a sinner's soul is most discernible in his imagination, because this carries the clearest character of it: The devil, by observing this often and carefully, comes to know what incitements to sin will most prevail with persons, and therefore in the temptations he lays before them, he suits their particular humours, corruptions, and inclinations: as for instance, he casts into the thoughts of aspiring, proud,

vain-glorious sinners, desires of worldly grandeur, honour, and preferment, and he can suggest to them ways how to advance and exalt themselves: he points and directs covetous sinners to unlawful means, and fraudulent devices of getting wealth and riches: he furnishes malicious sinners with methods to complete and execute their projected cruelty and barbarity: he knows how to fill reserved, silent, retired, and solitary persons with thoughts which either distract and torment them, or run them upon some piece of extraordinary and unnatural wickedness.

It is by the close and narrow observation which the devil takes of the imagination of the thoughts of sinners, that he exactly suits his temptations to them, whether they be vain-glorious or covetous, inconstant or inflexible, dull or airy, melancholic or merry, profane or superstitious, sceptical or enthusiastick. When sinners have forgot any wicked intention or purpose, the devil can be their remembrancer: he can revive, raise up again, and call forth all the images of blood, cruelty, and impurity, which have been formerly in the imagination of sinners, and so can excite them to pursue their former wicked purposes and resolutions.

2. It is by the narrow view and observation which the devil takes of the imagination of mens thoughts, that he gets a great knowledge of the secret workings of their souls.

souls. The devil cannot look directly into the understanding of a man, or know the immediate and immanent acts of his intellect : this is the knowledge of the heart, which God takes to himself, as his prerogative, Jer. xvii. 10. *I the Lord search the heart, and try the reins.* God only has a knowledge of the heart, which is immediate, perfect, and comprehensive. The devil cannot know the immediate, primary, and immanent acts of a man's understanding ; but he sees what is working in his imagination, when it is in conjunction with his understanding, and therefore he can easily guess, that what is in the one may probably be in the other. So far as the immediate acts of the understanding are transmitted to the imagination, so far they fall under the devil's knowledge, because whatever comes into the imagination is moulded and cast into some figure or shape : this the devil sees, and so knows all the consultations and contrivances of wicked men more exactly than they themselves ; when he knows all the wickedness they have contriv'd, fram'd, and purposed in their thoughts, he assists them in the execution of all that they have contriv'd and purposed.

3. It is by the narrow view and observation which the devil takes of the imagination of mens thoughts, that he knows how they stand affected to the discoveries which are

made to them by the word of God, of Christ, and of a world to come. All the representations which unregenerate men have in their thoughts of Christ, of heaven, and spiritual things, are formed in them by the help of a defiled imagination, and not by the light of faith ; and therefore because of the strong influence which the devil has upon their imagination he damps their languishing desires after Christ, overthrows their faint resolutions for heaven, and disputes them out of their traditional and historical belief of Gospel-truths. When unregenerate sinners are a little moved under the word, the devil casts into their thoughts unbelieving doubts and atheistical cavils about the truth of what they hear, and so the word has no good effect upon them. The devil is said to catch away the seed which is sown in the heart of such hearers of the word as are compared to the ground by the way-side, Matth. xiii. 19. *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.* When persons hear the word, who are led by fancy, and not guided by the light of faith, they receive no profit by it; because the devil cuts off in the middle all the thoughts which they have about the word, and their apprehensions of it are neither impressive, nor durable.

If it be by the narrow view and observation which the devil takes of the imagination of mens thoughts, that his temptations have a prevalence over them; then all the sin which they commit by the devil's instigation, is originally and principally from their own evil thoughts. It is a large measure of sin that the devil draws sinners to fill up: if this be so, then their own thoughts must be exceeding sinful, and when they justly blame the devil, they have more reason to condemn themselves.

II. The thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are exceeding sinful, because they give birth to all sinful acts. As the causes of evil are worse than their evil effects, so sinful thoughts are worse than sinful acts, as they are the causes of them. It is for this reason that evil thoughts are placed in the forefront, and lead the van in Christ's catalogue of sins, Matth. xv. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies.* Evil thoughts have the first rank in this black company, because evil thoughts give life and birth to all murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, and blasphemies. When sinners are let loose, either to imbrue their murderous hands in the blood of others, or to rob them of their chastity, or to spoil them of their goods, or to destroy their reputation by false reports and accusations, or to blaspheme God

God himself by spreading and propagating damnable errors and heresies, they first form and lay down the plan and model of all the aforesaid sins in their thoughts, and invent ways how to bring to pass all the evil they have contriv'd. The evil thoughts of men are the fruitful inventors of all new sins, of all new occasions of sinning, and of all excuses for breaking God's laws. As evil thoughts are the repository of old sins, so they are the mint of all new sins. All mischievous and bloody purposes, not only to destroy single persons and private families, but to overturn civil states and whole kingdoms, are fram'd in the thoughts. They who beguile and deceive, oppress and persecute others, lay the foundation of all the evil which they do in their thoughts, and they are never weary in contriving mischief, Ps. xxxviii.

12. They that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceit all the day long. Sinners can imagine evil all the day long, because of the unwearied motion of their evil thoughts. When the wise man reckons up seven things, which are an abomination to God, one of them is an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, *Prov. vi. 18.* Evil thoughts begin all sinful acts, and are the causes of them. All barbarous cruelties, horrid massacres, treasons, perjuries, violations of solemn treaties, false accusations, detestable acts of lewdness, and all other prodigious impieties,

impieties, which are recorded either in sacred or profane histories, from the beginning of the world to this time, had their first conception and birth from evil thoughts, and are not sufficient to paint out, and decypher, the sinfulness of them.

I shall mention one provoking aggravated sin, of which evil thoughts are the spring, and radical cause; it is external idolatry, or the worshiping images.

1. I shall shew, that all external idolatry in worshiping images, which either ever was in the world, or now is in, must be said to be from the sinful thoughts of men. External idolatry, in worshiping images, is natural to men in their fallen state: dry flax does not sooner catch the flame, than the depraved nature of men leads them to external idolatry, in worshiping images: in this they shew their apostacy from God, and their contrariety to him. God is a Spirit of infinite perfections, but men represent him by the mean figure of a corporeal image; because they have wrong thoughts, and absurd notions of God: it is the internal idolatry of their evil thoughts, which gives birth to all external idolatry, and is the spring of it. Men set up images of God in their thoughts, before they set them up, and fall down to worship them, in their temples: They affix their own weak, mistaken, crude thoughts to God, and this lays the foundation of all external image-worship, whereby

whereby the glory of the incorruptible God is turned into the image of corruptible and despicable creatures. They first frame false images of God, in their thoughts, and so are guilty of internal idolatry, and then they erect outward representations, or images of God, and so fall into the practice of external idolatry: they wrong God by internal images in their thoughts, and then they blaspheme him by external images, which they make out of wood and stone, silver and gold. All gross external Image-worship is from the monstrous conceits, ideas, and images, which men have of God in their evil thoughts. We may see this exemplified in the heathen philosophers. Rom. i. 21, 22, 23. *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four footed beasts, and creeping things.* The heathen philosophers sinned against their knowledge. *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God.* They did not maintain in opposition to the multitude, that there was one God and not many Gods. They had not the virtue, honesty, and courage of *Socrates* to choose a prison and sufferings, rather than comply with, and countenance the idolatrous practice

practice of the ignorant populace. When men sin against the light of knowledge and act in contradiction to it, there is no wickedness so great, but they are prepared to commit it. The philosophers disputed away the truth, or they lost it by their subtle alterations and disputes; *they became vain in their imaginations*, or reasonings. When they were most highly opinionated of their own wisdom, and thought themselves the wisest men, they became the greatest fools. *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools*; when they boasted of their wisdom, and would be called *σοφοί*, wise men, they proved self-confident fools, who of all fools are the worst. By their vain imaginations they fell from mental, internal idolatry, to the practice of external, corporeal idolatry. When they had once turned the glory of the incorruptible, immortal God, into the internal image of corruptible mortal man, they soon took a bold step farther, and turned the glory of God into the external image of sinful man. *They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man, to birds, to four-footed beasts, and creeping things.* It may be noted, that when men fall into external idolatry, they grow worse and worse in the visible representations and images, which they make of God. The heathen philosophers first worship'd God in the image of a man; but afterwards, as their evil thoughts guided

guided them, they fashioned God like to birds and beasts, and stop'd not till they worship'd God in the form of serpents, which are creatures the sight of whom, is so far from being grateful, that it is terrifying to man's nature.

2. I shall offer some things to evince, that external idolatry, in worshiping images, is a most crying and provoking sin; and if it be so, then from it we may necessarily infer the aggravated sinfulness of the thoughts of men, in their fallen state. It may be proved by four things, that external idolatry, in worshiping images is a crying and a provoking sin.

(1.) External idolatry in worshiping images, is a sin against the light of a man's natural conscience, and therefore it ought to be the more abhor'd. The light of a natural conscience is directly against image-worship, and ought to make every man rise up with detestation against the sin of them, who represent God by images, made and carved by the hands of frail creatures. We may observe, how the sin of idolatry is spoke of, by the prophet, as a sin which is against all reason, and the fruit of matchless stupidity. Isa. xliv.

16, 17. *He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he rosteth rost, & is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith Aha, I am warm I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a God, even his graven image; he falleth*

eth down unto it, and worshipeth it, and prayeth to it, and saith, deliver me, for thou art my God. This idolater was as destitute of the exercise of sense and reason, as the lifeless log he worship'd. The sin of idolatry cannot be the object of conscience, because it is most diametrically opposite to the natural light of conscience: a man needs no more than the natural light of his conscience, to put him upon rejecting the adoration of a piece of wood, stone, or metal. The light of conscience can never dictate to a man that what is fram'd by the hands of the mason, carpenter, and smith, can either be his God, or a fit medium to worship God in, and by. *Numa Pompilius* the *Roman* lawgiver allowed no images in the worshiping his false Gods, because he esteem'd it to be utterly unbecoming their greatness. It was for this reason, that the *Romans* worshiped their false Gods, a hundred and seventy years, without visible representations of them. Image-worship is a sin against the light of a natural conscience; so that when any pretend conscience, for the worshiping of images, they may as well plead conscience for the sin of parricide, or a man's killing his father and mother.

(2.) External idolatry in worshiping images, is a sin against the express letter of the second commandment: God, in the second commandment, absolutely forbids the making of any image whatsoever for worship. Exod. xx. 4,5.

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Thou shall not make unto thee any graven Image, or any likeness of any thing, that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thy self to them, nor serve them. This commandment is so directly against the making of all images, for adoration, that the papists are forced to cancele it from the common people, that their idolatry may not be discovered, and condemned by the vulgar. The peremptory and absolute prohibition, which is in this commandment, of worshiping God by images, is founded upon the most perfect reason.

[1.] The works of creation are much better representations of God, than any images made by the art of the most skilful masons, smiths, and carpenters, yet God would never be worship'd by them. The sun, moon, and stars are magnificent images of God's wisdom and power, yet the kissing of the hand to them, as representations of God, in his majesty, power, and dominion, is condemned as what was idolatry and a denial of God. Job xxxi. 26, 27, 28. *If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart has been secretly enticed, or my mouth has kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punish'd by the judge. For I should have denied the God that was above.* The worshiping of the sun, and moon, as it was much more antient than the worshiping

ing images made by men, so it was a sin to which there was a stronger temptation, than to the other; yet it was a crime to be punish'd by the judge.

[2.] To represent God by a bodily shape, or image, is to disgrace his nature, because it is to deny the spirituality of his nature: it is the greatest lie against God. The heathens in worshiping images, are said to turn the truth of God into a lie. Rom. i. 25. *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worship'd the creature, besides the Creator, who is God blessed for ever.* The representation of God, by *Jeroboam's* calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, is called the great wickedness, or the wickedness of wickedness, *Hos. x. 15.* Idolatry is the scum and dregs of all wickedness.

[3.] It is impossible to frame any image or likeness of the infinite nature of God. They who presume to draw, or represent, God by the stroak of a pencil, or the instruments of the most expert artificers, are guilty of superlative blockishness, Isa. xl. 17, 18. *All nations before him are as nothing, they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God; or what likeness will ye compare to him?* It is impossible, that a corporeal image can represent a spiritual substance. Where is the man that can draw the picture of a soul, which is a finite spirit? if no man can draw the picture of a soul, which is a finite spirit,

how can he make a material representation or image of God, who is an infinite spirit? It is not more impossible for our fleshly eyes, to see the invisible and incomprehensible God, than it is for our hands, to frame a likeness of him.

(3.) External Idolatry in worshiping images, is destructive of all true devotion. It destroys the very thing, which the papists urge as a principal argument for it. *Varro* the heathen observed, that the first setters forth of God by images, thereby encreased error, and took away all fear and reverence of God. The more raised thoughts we have of God, the lower thoughts shall we have of our selves, and the more humble adorers shall we be of him; but when we have depressed and undervaluing thoughts of God, he will never be the object of our believing confidence, of our highest admiration, and of our ardent affections. When we have low apprehensions of God, we make our approaches to him without reverence, and our prayers are formal but not fervent. Image-worship is so far from helping devotion, that it destroys it, because it leads men to think most meanly, and irreverently, of God. A long trial has taught this part of the world, to judge what true devotion there is among the papists, who are such bold blasphemers of God, as to represent him in the picture and shape of a little old man.

(4.) External

(4.) External idolatry in worshiping images brings the fierce anger of God upon a people. Image-worship is the highest sacrilege, because it steals from God the manifestative glory which all his reasonable creatures ought to give him. This is a sin that God will punish, because he will not give his glory to graven images, *Isai. xlii. 8. My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.* The worshipers of graven images shall not escape the revenging hand of God, ver. 17. *They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed that trust in graven images.* They must according to the prayer of the church of God be confounded, *Ps. xcvi. 7. Confounded be all they who serve graven images.* This prayer is upon the file against all image-worshipers, and they must be confounded. The punishment which God brings upon all idolaters, or image-worshipers, is either temporary, or eternal. It is a punishment which is temporary in this world. God brings the greatest calamities upon image-worshipers in this life, as may be seen in his dealings with the people of *Israel*, when they turned idolaters in worshiping images: besides it is a punishment which will be eternal in the other world. Idolaters, who live and die in their sin without repentance, are expressly excluded from inheriting the kingdom of God, *1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. If God does not first save idolaters from*

their sin through Christ, they cannot be saved in their sin, but must be thrown into hell for it. God has said it, and who can with safety presume to deny it?

I shall now answer some objections which the popish party start, to deceive the ignorant people, and to excuse their idolatry, in worshiping images.

[1.] The papists object, that the prophet *Daniel* saw God in the shape of a man, Dan. vii. 9. *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the antient of days sat, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool.* The argument, which the papists draw from the words of the prophet, is this: as God appeared to the prophet, so may we represent him; but God appeared to the prophet in the shape of a man, therefore we may represent him in the shape of a man. To this I answer: this argument is inconclusive, and proves nothing. God may appear in any likeness he pleases, but it does not follow that we may represent him in a visible form, except he command us to do it. Besides, the appearance of God to *Daniel* was only to be a sign of his presence for that time, wherein he appeared to him, but no longer: it was a temporary, but not a standing symbol of God's presence; and the sight which the prophet had of God coming to judgment, was in a rapture or extasy accommodated to his inward sense, but his outward

outward senses were not exercised in the vision which he had of God. God did not appear to his outward eye in the shape of a man, but it was only in a vision that he had this appearance of God, and therefore it can never be a proof for the making a visible image of God. All visions, riddles, and metaphors, are not to be understood literally, but allegorically. God is described in the prophet's vision, not as he is in himself, but in his fitness to be a judge. He is called the antient of days, in respect of his eternity ; he is said to have a white garment, because of the purity of his nature, and his hair is said to be pure like the wool, because of his infinite wisdom to discern and distinguish between right and wrong.

[2.] The papists object, that many of the members of our bodies, as well as the affections of our souls, are ascribed to God in the scriptures ; and from this they argue, that it is lawful for us to paint and represent God as he is declared to us in his word. To this I answer ;

1.) When God ascribes to himself any of the members of our bodies, he graciously condescends to our narrow and weak capacities. As the glory of heaven, for the most part, is now revealed to us under the veil of the good things of this life ; so God, under the similitude of our bodily members, makes known the perfections of his nature to us in our

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present imperfect state. God does this that we may know something of him, but not that we may draw pictures, and make images of him: when he assumes a resemblance of us, it is a merciful accommodation to our weakness, but it is a great wickedness in us to turn it to his reproach.

2.) When God ascribes to himself any of the members of our bodies, he does it to signify his acts and works, as they bear some analogy to the operations which are performed by us in the use of our members. When he is said to have a head, eyes, and arms, we must understand by them his infinite wisdom, omniscience, and almighty power, as they are acted by him. The members of our bodies, which God ascribes to himself, express his mighty and wonderful works, which are visible, but they are not descriptive of his divine nature, which is invisible.

3.) We must consider the end and design of all the metaphorical expressions concerning God, which we meet with in the scriptures. We must not form apprehensions of God according to the letter of them, but according to the intent of them. When Christ calls himself a door, a vine, and bread, will any be so unreasonable and absurd as to imagine, that he is either a door, which gives entrance into a house, or a vine that has branches and clusters, or material bread that goes down into the stomach?

If

If we will represent God in the image of a man, because the members and affections of a man are ascrib'd to him, then by the same rule we may represent him in the likeness of light, fire, a rock, a bear, a lion, and a leopard, because God has compared himself to all the aforesaid things in the scriptures; if it were a justifiable reason to represent God in the shape of a man, because he ascribes to himself the members of a man's body, then there would be the same reason to represent God in the likeness of many other creatures, to which he compares himself; and if this were done, what monstrous images should we have of God?

When we cannot apprehend God in the infinite perfection of his nature, he compares himself to several creatures in several of their actions and affections; not that we should stop in such resemblances of him, but that we should take our rise from them, to mount up higher in our thoughts of his excellencies and perfections. When we find in the scriptures the perfections of any of the creatures transfer'd and applied to God, we must think they are infinitely higher in God than they are in the creatures.

[3.] The papists, for the defence of their image-worship, plead, that we cannot think of God without some image of him in our thoughts; and then they urge that as we conceive of him in our minds, so may he be represented

represented and figured to our sense. To this I answer ;

1.) This is no better argument than to bring a less sin to excuse a greater, or a sin of imperfection to justify a wilful, presumptuous, resolved violation of the law of God. If we are naturally liable, because of our sinful impotence, to form images of God in our thoughts, will this bear us out in framing visible figures and images of him in the mason's, smith's, or carpenter's shop ? The images of God, which are in our thoughts, are from the contraction of our finite nature ; but the images, which the *Romanists* worship, are made by themselves, and are their own voluntary inventions.

2.) All the false images of God, which rise up in our thoughts naturally, ought to be rejected by us, when our understandings are directed by the light of faith. We must not countenance and favour the material images of God which spring up in our thoughts, but we must thrust them away.

[4.] The papists allege, that they do not worship images, but God and Christ by the images, which are made to represent them. They profess that they use images, not to worship them, but to revive their memories, to compose their thoughts, and to enflame their affections towards the objects of divine adoration. To this subterfuge they betake themselves, when they are press'd with a close charge ;

charge; but what they say in this respect has nothing of truth or honesty in it.

1.) The common people among the papists terminate their worship as directly and immediately in the images, before which they bow and kneel, as ever the heathen vulgar did. The most unpolish'd heathens did not worship their images in a grosser manner, than the ignorant papists do theirs. If images be not worship'd by the populace in the church of *Rome*, then we may say no images were ever worship'd in this world.

2.) If the learned papists distinguish and separate in their thoughts the object of adoration from the image, which is the medium of worship, this will not acquit them from being guilty of real idolatry. The learned and wiser part of the heathens did this: they disclaim'd the practice of worshiping images, and said they worship'd their Gods by them. The *Israelites* did not worship the calf, but God by the calf: this is undeniably true, because of two things.

1.] When they saw the calf, they cried out, *These are thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* We cannot rationally suppose, that they thought the calf, which *Aaron* had newly made, brought about their miraculous deliverance from their bondage in *Egypt*: they could not think this, but they took the calf to be a representation of God, who had delivered them.

2.] When

2.] When *Aaron* proclaim'd a feast upon the account of the calf, he said it was a feast unto the Lord, Exod. xxxii. 5. *To-morrow is a feast to the Lord, or to Jehovah*: he meant the true God; it was the true God the *Israelites* worship'd in and by the calf, and yet when the apostle speaks of what they did, and cites the words of *Moses*, he calls them idolaters, 1 Cor. x. 7. *Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them: as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.* Tho' the *Israelites* worship'd *Jehovah* by the calf, yet they were idolaters, and so will the *Romanists* prove to be, notwithstanding all their refined distinctions.

If all the idolatry, which either ever was, or now is, in the world, must be said to be from mens evil thoughts, and if idolatry be a crying provoking sin, which brings God's displeasure upon a people; then from the greatness of this sin we may necessarily infer the aggravated sinfulness of the thoughts of men, in their fallen state,

III. The thoughts of men, in their fallen state, are exceeding sinful, because all sins, and the greatest sins, may be internally acted in the thoughts. To act sin internally, in the thoughts, is to be understood thus; it is when sinners have not only sinful thoughts, but when their desires unite with their sinful thoughts, and when they wish for opportunities to bring into practice what they think and

and desire. This is to act sin internally, in the thoughts. Christ speaks of intentional adultery, or of that adultery which is committed in the heart, when there may be no external commission of it, Matth. v. 28. *Whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart.* It is in the sense aforesaid, that all sins and the greatest sins may be internally acted in the thoughts.

1. All sins may be internally acted in the thoughts of sinners, when nothing of sin may be visible in their lives. When there are no ulcers in men's lives, and when they are outwardly restrain'd from sin, because of fear and shame, because of the regard they have for their reputation in this world, and because they are without means and instruments to execute what they desire and long after; they can then act all sin in their thoughts. It is the mint of their evil thoughts, that creates a sink of vile, impure desires, and lusts in their hearts, and then there is no sin but they can act it internally, and with black aggravations.

(1.) They can, with great ease, multiply acts of sin in their thoughts. Evil thoughts are so fruitful to invent, and so quick internally to act sin, that the thoughts of one man can contrive, and can inwardly act more sin, than all the sinners in the world can bring into practice. He can intentionally, in his

thoughts and desires, plunder and ravage all the nations, and murder all the men in the world, in one moment. The unchaste sinner can commit lewdness thousands of times in his thoughts, 2 Pet. ii. 24. *Having eyes full of adultery, (or of the adulteress, μοιχαλιδῶς.) and that cannot cease from sin.* It may be asked, how were their eyes full of the adulteress? It was because they did not only with unchaste eyes look upon the women they lust-ed after, when they were present, but they had their images set up in their thoughts, and so could view them internally with lascivious desires, when they were absent: this made them guilty of internal acts of adultery before God, when they did not and could not act any bodily uncleanness: when they had eyesfull of the adulteress, they could not cease from sin. When the souls of sinners are fix-ed in the vehement pursuit of their lusts, they continually ruminare on the things which they lust after, and they have many contrivances about them, 'till the images of the things themselves be set up in their thoughts. The objects of their lusts frame images of them-selves in their thoughts, and then they have such a furious uncontroled motion in their desires towards them, that they cannot cease from sin. When they cannot cease from sin, they act with the greatest violence to bring the utmost misery on themselves.

(2.) They

(2.) They can act over and over again the same sins in their thoughts, and as often as they re-act the same sins in their thoughts, they put a new stain of guilt into them. It is for this reason, that one particular sin becomes many thousand sins, for guilt and pollution. What guilt and pollution then do they bring upon their souls, when they re-act in their thoughts their pride, injustice, deceit, uncleanness, murders, drunkenness, and all their other ungodly deeds ?

When unregenerate sinners are under the greatest decays of old age, and have no bodily strength left for the commission of sin, they can then act over again the lusts of their youth in their thoughts : when their sins retreat from their practice, because of the weakness of old age, they retire into their defiled fancies, wherein they find a wider boundary, and a vaster circuit to act in, than they had before. It is upon this score, that several sinners are fullest of sin, and arrive to the greatest growth in it, when their outward constitution is most impaired. It is the privilege of believers, that when their outward man perishes, their inward man is renewed day by day : when they cannot move hand or foot here on earth, their souls rise up towards heaven, with a stronger and quicker motion. The privilege of believers, in this respect, is not greater than the judgment is, which old sinners are under ; when they are

upon the brink of the grave, and are nearest to the time of receiving the full reward of their sins, they act over in their thoughts their youthful lusts, with pleasure and delight, and so give fresh provocations to God, as he is their judge, when they are just falling under the irresistible power of his infinite wrath.

2. The greatest sins may be internally acted in the thoughts. All spiritual sins, which are most like the devil's sins, and of the same kind with them, are inwardly acted in the thoughts of unregenerate men; as envy at the good and prosperity of others, malice and enmity against the image of God, unbelief concerning the truth of God's word, and confidence in a man's own righteousness and strength. All sins of this nature may be acted in the thoughts, which are the greatest sins, and carry the blackest guilt in them.

The more spiritual any sin is, the worse it is, and the more evil must be in it; because it bears a greater contradiction to the holiness of God, and puts persons into a farther distance from the fountain of their life: and they, who are guilty of any spiritual sin, are of all most hardly brought to repent of it, and to forsake it. When we repent of sin, conviction must begin our repentance, but it is with the greatest difficulty that we are laid under the conviction of spiritual sins. When sinners lie in the mire of gross sensuality, and thereby proclaim their wicked-

wickedness, it is no hard task to stop their mouths, and to answer all the pleas which they can allege for their sins ; but when men are guilty of spiritual sins, it is no less than the same power which raised up Christ from the dead, that can bring them under a sense of their sins ; because when spiritual sins reign most in them, they may have a fair reputation for religion, and may be blameless in the eyes of others.

IV. *The application.*

I shall now make some application in three things.

I. If the thoughts of all men, in their fallen state, be naturally and altogether sinful, then this may inform us of two things.

1. It may inform us, that the varnish of a moral outside reformation is so far from proving us to be out of the greatest danger, and in a safe happy state, that it consists with our being under the guilt, defilement, and dominion of sin. If we are blameless in our lives, and yet take no care of our thoughts, but let them rove and wander about, without restraint, then what Christ said of the Pharisees may be affirmed of us, Matth. xxiii. 27, 28. *Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ; for ye are like to whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead mens bones,*

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and of all uncleanness ; even so ye also outwardly appear righteous men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. When the Pharisees were great enemies to imputed righteousness, and stood upon a righteousness of their own, to justify them before God, they were no friends to inherent holiness ; they did not more openly oppose the first, than they did wholly neglect the latter : they had a new appearance, but nothing of a new nature ; there was a moral change in their lives, but no spiritual change in their hearts : they threw out one devil, but made way for the entrance of seven worse : they had a beautiful outside, but their inside was the abode of all evil thoughts, and the center of the most rampant lusts.

Our thoughts possess our hearts, and cast them into their own shape and figure ; as our thoughts are, so is the frame of our hearts : when all our thoughts are evil, the frame of our hearts will be carnal. Sinners cannot render themselves more hateful, in the sight of God, by acting evil, than they do by thinking evil.

2. It may inform us where true repentance must begin ; it must have its beginning in our thoughts : we never repent of the actual sins of our lives, when we do not first repent of our sinful thoughts. *Simon Magus* was commanded to repent of the thought of his heart, which was a covetous thought of purchasing the

the gift of the Holy Ghost by money, *Acts viii.* 22. *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if peradventure the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* The apostle *Peter* made the greatest doubt about the mercy of God to *Simon Magus*, in pardoning the thought of his heart; he thought the mercy of God was most likely to stop, and stick at this. *If peradventure (said he) the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* It is as if he had said, this vile covetous thought of thy heart is more likely than all thy other sins to be thy eternal ruin, and to render thy case without remedy.

Sinners are in the gall of bitterness, in the bond of iniquity, and all their hopes of being saved from the eternal vengeance of God are vain presumptions, as long as their hearts are not wash'd and cleans'd from their wicked thoughts. When sinners will not repent of their evil thoughts, and shut their eyes against any light which breaks into their conscience about them, they shall find, that the sinful thoughts, for which they have no trouble here, will be their tormentors for ever hereafter. As the last day will reveal the judgment of God to be righteous, so it will lay open all the evil thoughts of sinners, for their shame, confusion and torment. They shall in hell be led about from one unclean room of their hearts to another, to see with horror all the swarms of their sinful thoughts and

lusts: this will greatly add to the bitterness of their sorrows, and the sharpness of their torments.

II. If the thoughts of all men, in their fallen state, are naturally and altogether sinful, then we ought to examine, whether there is a change of our thoughts from evil to good thoughts. When there is a change of our state, from a state of condemnation to a state of justification, there is a change of our frame; and when our frame is changed, there will be a change of our thoughts from evil to good thoughts. When we are brought into a new state by justification, we have a new frame, which is to be renewed in the spirit of our mind, Ephes. iv. 23. *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.* When we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, there is a spring of new thoughts created in us, and we are no longer strangers and enemies, but are friends to all pure heavenly thoughts and meditations.

By three things we may know that we are renewed in the spirit of our minds, and that there is a change of our thoughts, from evil to good thoughts.

I. There is a change of our thoughts, from evil to good thoughts, when our sinful thoughts are matter of humiliation and sorrow to us. When there is a change of our frame, and thereupon a change of our thoughts, we shall be humbled before God, and be fill'd with sorrow, because there is in us a store-house of

of innumerable evil thoughts, when yet there is naturally no disposition, or inclination, in us for any good thoughts. When we have come under a spiritual change, in the frame of our souls, we shall be cast down in our selves, and shall have great sorrow for our sinful thoughts, because they are the parents of all actual sins, the contrivers of all mischief, the bellows and incendiaries of the most imperious lusts, the hinderers of all good, and our greatest disturbers in our solemn approaches to God.

2. There is a change of our thoughts, from evil to good thoughts, when all sinful thoughts are our burden. Ungodly men may sometimes be startled at evil words, and immoral actions, but they see no sin in evil thoughts, and are insensible of the burden of them. Sinful thoughts are no burden to men in their unregeneracy ; but sinful thoughts are a great burden to all believers ; and as they are weary of the burden of their sinful thoughts, so they cry out and complain of their burden to God, who can support them under it, and can deliver them from it.

3. There is a change of our thoughts, from evil to good thoughts, when we either suppress the rising of evil thoughts within us, or set ourselves against them, and strive to drive them out, when they have risen up within us. True believers may have as bad thoughts as the greatest sinners, because the

unregenerate part in them is a receptacle for the worst and the most sinful thoughts. It is not what thoughts believers may have, but it is what thoughts they hate and reject, and what thoughts they invite and entertain, which specifically distinguishes their frame from the frame of unregenerate sinners. It is not the having vain thoughts, but it is the giving entertainment to vain thoughts, which is the mark of sinners in a perishing condition, *Jer. iv. 24. O Jerusalem wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?* It is as if God had said thus by the prophet, when wilt thou be weary of thy vain thoughts which are thy lodgers? When wilt thou bid them be gone, when thou hast so long bid them welcome? The essential difference between the frame of unregenerate sinners, and the frame of true believers, is this; all vain sinful thoughts lodge in unregenerate sinners, but they do not lodge in believers: vain thoughts are in them as intruders, but not as lodgers.

(1.) All vain sinful thoughts lodge in the souls of unregenerate sinners. What is it for vain sinful thoughts to lodge in unregenerate sinners? I answer; it is when they give vain sinful thoughts entertainment, hold a parley with them, freely close with, and take delight in them. All vain wicked thoughts pass uncontroll'd and unlamented,

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OF SINFUL THOUGHTS. 199

in the hearts of unregenerate sinners, as damps in the bowels of the earth : good thoughts are a burden to them, but they are so far from being troubled for evil thoughts, that they are pleased when they are fill'd and freighted with them, especially when they are under the hearing of the word of God, and should attentively listen to it, that they may be convinced of their sin, and instructed about their duty.

(2.) Believers have many vain, sinful thoughts, which knock at the doors of their hearts, pass through them, and ask for lodging ; but they do not open the doors of their hearts to vain sinful thoughts, and they do not receive them for guests and lodgers. Many vain, sinful thoughts are in believers, as intruders, and by their intrusion trouble them ; but vain, sinful thoughts are not in them as welcome guests and lodgers. Vain, sinful thoughts do not lodge in believers, because the frame of believers is settled and habitually disposed for two things.

[1.] The frame of all believers is settled, and habitually disposed to disapprove, oppose, and resist all vain, sinful thoughts. The strongest believers cannot hinder the most sinful thoughts from being either injected into them by Satan, or rising up from the remaining corruption of their own hearts ; but they make head against them, and endeavour to suppress them. Vain, sinful thoughts were

200 OF SINFUL THOUGHTS.

not greater sharers of the affections of select persons, before their conversion, than they are the objects of their hatred, after they are converted. Every believer can say with the Psalmist, Ps. cxix. 113. *I hate vain thoughts.* A believer hates all vain thoughts, as they are sprouts from the bitter root of his corrupt nature, and the vanity of his thoughts is his standing trouble : he would be purer in the sight of God, who sees his thoughts, than he desires to be in the sight of men, who see his actions. This is the reason, why he is as careful to avoid sinful thoughts, as he is to abstain from sinful acts.

[2.] The frame of believers is settled, and habitually disposed to approve, invite, cherish, and befriend good thoughts. Believers bid good thoughts welcome when they enter, lead them into the inner rooms of their souls, delight in their company and converse, invite them to stay, endeavour to hold them fast, are troubled when they are gone, and long for their return.

III. If all our thoughts, while we are in a fallen state, are not barely sinful, but exceeding sinful, because it is by our evil thoughts that the devil's temptations prevail upon us, because our sinful thoughts give birth to all sinful acts ; and because all sins, and the greatest sins, may be inwardly acted in our thoughts, then we ought to keep up and maintain a strict watch over our thoughts, and to bring them

OF SINFUL THOUGHTS. 201

them under government. To be careful about our thoughts is a most certain discovery of the truth of our grace. They who take liberty to think what they will, would be glad to have leave and opportunity to do what they will ; but when we are afraid to think amiss, we are delivered from the dominion of sin, and are under the conduct of the Spirit of grace. All the fruit of our souls is born of our thoughts ; our actions are the fruits of our thoughts ; what we think is what we either do, or would do. Our thoughts are least known to others, but we are best known to ourselves by our thoughts, I mean, the thoughts which we approve.

There are two things, of which every believer ought to be most careful, *viz.* his heart, and his lips : the heart is the citadel of the soul, and must be chiefly kept, and the tongue is the outworks, and must not be neglected. If we would put away not only a foward mouth, but sinful thoughts, we must keep our hearts with all diligence, Prov. iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* The motion of a believer is introverted ; he turns in much upon himself, fixes his eye upon his heart, and keeps that with all diligence, that he may observe the weeds of sinful thoughts which shoot up in his heart, and may, upon the first sight of them, cut them up, and cast them out ; and that he may observe the good thoughts, which

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spring up in his heart, and may cherish them, as they are the issues of the spiritual life of grace.

The great and daily work of all believers is a secret inward work ; it is to make conscience of their thoughts, to observe the several motions of them, to manage them a-right, and to bring them under government. I shall lay down four directions, that we may know how to free ourselves from sinful thoughts, and how to get good thoughts.

1. We must observe the rule which God has given us for our thoughts, and what he has prescribed as the matter of our meditations, Phil. iv. 8. *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* The apostle here measures a large field, wherein the thoughts of all believers ought to move and walk : it is as if he had said thus, brethren, what things are agreeable to the light of nature, and the light of the scriptures, what things are righteous between man and man, what things are chaste in speech, habit, and behaviour, what things meet with a general approbation, from such as are not only under a virtuous restraint, but under a religious impression, and what things are truly commendable, and bring honour

nour to the profession of the gospel, think on them, and let them be the employment of your thoughts : $\lambda\omega\gammai\zeta\omega\delta\epsilon$, meditate on them, discourse and reason in your thoughts about them. Scripture truths are green and fresh pastures, where our thoughts ought to feed, and especially the transactions of Christ mediator. God from eternity had numberless thoughts about Christ mediator, and our redemption thro' him, Ps. xl. 5. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us ward; they cannot be reckon'd up in order to thee.* If the infinite numberless thoughts of God, from eternity, terminated in Christ, and in our salvation through him, then Christ, and the great things which he has done and suffered for us, are the fittest subjects for our thoughts. The eternal federal transactions of Christ, with God the Father, as our surety, his coming in the flesh, his obeying the precept of the law, and his undergoing the penalty of it in our stead and place, his resurrection, his ascension, his advocacy and intercession in heaven for us, are most raised and noble subjects for us to go often over in our thoughts. When we do this, it is a spiritual heavenly life, that we shall live here on earth.

2. Diligence in our lawful, civil callings will help us to put away sinful thoughts. There are two things which we must do, with respect to our callings.

(1.) We

(1.) We must not incumber ourselves with too much business in our callings, because this breeds unnecessary cares, and brings many wandering thoughts. When men overburden themselves with the business of this world, and undertake too much of it in their callings, their minds are so enervated, and their spirits are so exhausted, that they have nothing left wherewith to fill up the service of God, but sleepy nods, unseemly yawns, and drowsy lolling, and irreverent bodily postures: they act as if they thought God is either not to be worship'd at all, or that, if they give him any worship, it must not only be carnal, but most unseemly and indecent. A dream is said to come through the multitude of business, Eccles. v. 3. *A dream cometh through the multitude of business.* As a dream comes through the multitude of business, that disturbs us when we are asleep, so when we grasp at too much business in our callings, we shall have a multitude of unseasonable, distracting, and tormenting thoughts, when we are awake. There is a dreadful curse from God upon a man's calling, when it abridges him of his time to wait upon God in all the parts of his worship, and to take care of his foul: he greatly sins, when he does so fill up his time with the thoughts and cares of this life, that he has no time to meditate upon the world to come, and to prepare for a better life. While a believer is in

in this world, and has both strength of body and ability of mind for the work of his calling, and has success in it, he must not leave it, but he must throw off the clogs and incumbrances of it, and avoid all the snares which are in it; he must not cast off business, but he must retire from the crowd of it.

•(2.) We must be diligent in our callings, in the seasons wherein we ought to be employ'd, to do the work of them. As too many are fill'd with sinful thoughts, because they have too much to do in their callings, so some have throngs of sinful thoughts, because they have no callings to follow, which might hedge in their thoughts. Our thoughts are restless and will be busied one way or other, and when they are unconfin'd, they will be like the wild afs in the wilderness, which sucks up the wind, *Jer. ii. 24.*

God has appointed callings for all persons, to entertain their thoughts, to find them work, and to fill up the empty intervals of time, which come between the several duties and exercises of religion. To act in season and with moderation in our civil callings, will secure us from sinful thoughts; but when we are doing nothing which is good, we shall be intent in thinking upon evil: The devil will quickly find us work to do, if we be found doing no work for God.

3. We must realize to our selves the omniscience of God, or get a practical belief of the

206 OF SINFUL THOUGHTS.

the perfection of his infinite knowlege: This will check all evil thoughts in us. When we really believe that we are under the eye of God, we shall not let our thoughts wander after sin, but we shall blush more at the rising of impure thoughts in us before God, than we do at the discovery of our worst actions before men. God sees all the thoughts which are framed in the cell of our darkest imaginations; he not only sees our actions, but what thoughts we have, and for what ends we do them. Psal. xi. 4. *His eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men.* The eyelids in us are a covering and fence for our eyes; but in God they are light it self, in its greatest clearness, to try the children of men. We must have a light in the air, as well as in the eye, and we must be near to visible objects, before we can see them; but God has the infinite light of all knowlege in himself, and he sees things, when they are most remote, as well as when they are near; when they are in the dark, as well as when they are in the light. God, who brought light out of darkness for man's use, can do it for his own. No politic device, no excuses, no masks or disguises, can make any thing seem otherwise than it is to God, much less hide it from him. We cannot conceal our thoughts from God, because he knows them, long before they rise up in our minds; and if so, he cannot but know them, when they are in our hearts, Psal cxxxix. 2, 3. *Thou knowest*

knowest my down-sitting, and my up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. As God knows our thoughts exactly, when they are innumerable, and as he knows them in their drift and tendency, whither they move and go; so he knows them long before they can be called our thoughts; he knows them as far off as eternity.

A true belief of God's omniscience and omnipresence, will restrain us from all sinful thoughts, as well as from all loose unexamin'd actions and unsavory words. When persons take to themselves a boldness to act, speak, and think, as they will, it is because they do not believe God to be omniscient and omnipresent. The believing consideration of God's knowing all things, and of his being every where present, will not only put away evil thoughts from us, but it will raise good thoughts in us. When the Psalmist had got his heart under the believing apprehensions of God's omniscience and omnipresence, he had a fix'd preparation and readiness, at all times, for good thoughts, Psal. cxxxix. 18. *When I awake, I am still with thee.* God was so much in his thoughts, that he was the object of his meditation, whenever he awak'd. When God and the things of heaven make strong and deep impressions on our spirits, we shall first think on them when we awake. If we remem-

ber that God sees all our thoughts, and keeps a register of them, we shall take care of our thoughts.

4. We must be sensible of our own inability, and must rely on the sufficiency of Christ to raise good thoughts in us, 2 Cor. iii. 5. *Not that we are sufficient, of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.* The apostle was indued with many excellent gifts, for the ministry, and yet he attributed nothing to himself, but all to God; he speaks here of his insufficiency to think any thing, for the right discharge of his office, as he was an apostle of Christ Jesus: if he was insufficient in himself, to think any thing for the exercise of ministerial gifts, then much more was he insufficient in himself, to think any thing for the acting of grace, because the latter is more difficult than the former. It would be the greatest ignorance, and the most insufferable presumption in us, if we should not speak after this great proficient in all gifts and grace, and if we should not have the same sense for kind of our own insufficiency. There are two things to be observ'd in the apostle's words:

(1.) Our own insufficiency for what is good is universal. We are not only unable, and insufficient, to act, and to do what is good, but we have no ability to think what is good. The word *inxavōrns* signifies self-fitness. We have no fitness in our selves, to think any thing.

thing. A thought is the first thing which springs up in the soul, and is the lowest step in the ladder of preparation for a good work ; but even this the apostle deny'd to be in himself, and shall any of us say we have it ? No spiritual act can be done without thinking spiritually, but we have no fitness for this in our selves. We are not only unable, and insufficient, to think something which is choice, admirable, and sublime ; but we cannot think any thing as of ourselves : our insufficiency is so great, that we can neither think one thought which is good, nor hinder the thinking of many thousands of thoughts which are evil : we must be sensible that we have no power or ability in our selves, for good thoughts.

(2.) It is only in God, thro' Christ, that we can have a sufficiency, or ability, for good thoughts. Our sufficiency is of God. Every good thought, for any spiritual gracious act, is from the sufficiency of Christ. Spiritual thinking is the first thing necessary to all spiritual acts, and it is perpetually necessary to a progress in spiritual acts. It is in Christ alone, that we can have a power to think spiritually, both for the beginning of spiritual acts, and for a progress in them : from his sufficiency we must have a spring as well as a stream of spiritual thoughts, to make a progress in good actions. When our insufficiency is universal, not only

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for good actions, but for good thoughts, it is our comfort, that we may rely on Christ, for a sufficiency, to think spiritually, that we may proceed with stedfastness to act spiritually.

All our thoughts are naturally sinful, and not barely sinful, but exceeding sinful. What must we do when we are sensible of this? I answer; we must rely on Christ, who can bring our most scattered thoughts into order, and our most rebellious thoughts into subjection to himself, by the working of his Spirit. It argues the almighty power of the grace of Christ, that he can rule and govern the vast army of our thoughts, and can bring them to move and march regularly, under his banner. It is Christ by his Spirit, in the ministry of the word, that casts down imaginations, and every high thing, that exalts it self, against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought, that it may be obedient to himself, 2 Cor. x. 5. *Casting down imaginations (or reasonings,) and every high thing, that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

Let us constantly pray, that Christ may bring our thoughts into captivity to himself, and may begin his regency over them in this life, that we may have spiritual thoughts, and may abound in spiritual gracious acts, till we come

OF SINFUL THOUGHTS. 211

come to heaven, where Christ will bring all our thoughts under a perfect discipline, because he will there make us perfectly holy: it is in heaven that we shall be for ever freed from all evill thoughts, and shall never be without the purest and best thoughts.



24 OC 62

OF THE
Covenant of G R A C E:

Or of the

COVENANT,
Which God the Father made with Jesus
Christ.





OF THE
COVENANT OF GRACE.

PSAL. lxxxix. 3.

*I have made a covenant with my chosen, I
have sworn to David my servant.*



LL men, as they sinned and fell in the first *Adam*, come under the curse of the violated law of the covenant of works, and so are in a most miserable state: when they are in this lost and helpless condition, there is no relief for them, but only in that covenant, which God made with his Son Jesus Christ. The covenant of works, when it is duly considered by us, as we are born into the world under it, cannot but fill us with the utmost horror. It is out of this covenant, as

out of a black thunder-cloud, that the fire of hell is flash'd into our guilty conscience; but the covenant which God made with Christ brings a divine, heavenly, comforting light, into our bemisted, terrified souls; which will shine out more and more, to the perfect day. The covenant of works lays us under condemnation, as we are sinners, deprives us of all hope, and casts us into a depth of despair; but the covenant which God made with Christ, reverses the sentence which is against us, raises us out of our guilty state, and gives us a joyful triumph over all our fears: the covenant of works carries us to the brink of the boundless, and bottomless ocean of God's infinite wrath, which no sinner can of himself pass through, without being overwhelm'd, and drown'd in the swelling and raging waves of it; but the covenant of grace, both provides and reveles a Redeemer, who can go before us, to divide and dry up the deep gulph, that we may pass safely over, into a land of eternal rest.

This Psalm bears the title of *Maschil*, which signifies instruction, and was made by *Ethan the Ezrahite*, who is mentioned, as one of the wise men in *Solomon's* time, *1 Kings iv. 31*. *Ethan*, who was guided by the inspiration of God, in composing this song, gives a most lively description of God's confirming his covenant with *David*, as the type, and with *Jesus Christ*, as the antitype. A far more transcendent

transcendent person, than *David* or *Solomon* must be intended; as may easily be observed in several places of the Psalm. *Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne, to all generations*, ver. 4. *His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven*, ver. 29. *His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me: it shall be established as the moon, and as a faithful witness in the heaven*, ver. 36, 37. What seed, but that of Christ, endures for ever? What throne, but the throne of Christ, will be established throughout all generations?

That which puts it out of doubt, that the covenant, which is here mentioned, was a covenant made with Christ, is this; the twenty sixth verse of this Psalm, is applied by the apostle to Christ, when he proves him to be greater than any of the created angels, *Heb. i. 4, 5.*

The observation which I shall raise from the words is this.

God the Father made a covenant with Jesus Christ.

In speaking to this truth I shall do four things.

I. I shall prove, that God the Father made a covenant with Jesus Christ.

II. I

II. I shall shew, in what relation Christ stood, when God the Father made a covenant with him ; and when it was, that great transaction pass'd between the two divine Persons.

III. I shall shew, of what kind and nature the covenant is, which God the Father made with Christ.

IV. I shall shew, what were the stipulations of God the Father, and the restipulations of Jesus Christ, in the covenant which was made between them.

I. *The proof of a covenant between God the Father and Christ.*

I shall begin with endeavouring to prove, that God the Father made a covenant with Jesus Christ ; and in order to do that, I shall bring one argument, which is this. Where there are proposals and promises, made on one part, and where there is a consent to the proposals, with a promise to perform all the required conditions, on the other part, there must be a formal express covenant ; because a covenant is a stipulation between two persons, or parties, in something pleasing to both, and voluntarily consented to by both, upon certain conditions, which they bind themselves respectively to perform, by solemn obligations.

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The argument may run thus: Where there are proposals and promises, on one part, and where there is a consent, on the other part, there must be a covenant; but between God the Father, and Christ, in the matter of our salvation, there are proposals and promises, on God the Father's part, and a voluntary consent to the proposals, together with a free engagement to perform the required conditions, on Christ's part: therefore there is a formal, express covenant between them. The major proposition is indisputably true; because proposals and promises, on one part, and a voluntary consent to the proposals, with a free agreement to perform the required conditions, on the other part, are all the things necessary to a formal express covenant: The minor proposition, which I shall confirm, is this; proposals and promises were made by God the Father to Christ, which he accepted, and engaged to perform the required conditions.

1. I shall prove, that proposals and promises were made by God the Father, to Jesus Christ. *Isai.* xlix. 1,—12. God the Father and Christ are brought in, and represented, as entering into a great debate; the one propounds, the other answers to the proposals, and insists upon further grants. God the Father propounds the glorification of Christ, as the head of the *Jews*, and calls him by the name of *Israel*, ver. 3. *Thou art my servant, O Israel,*
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in whom I will be glorified. Christ answers to this proposal, and pleads that it is too narrow. Ver. 4. *I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain.* It is as if Christ had said, O Father, it is but a little glory which will redound, either to thee, or me, by the salvation of a small handful of the *Jews*: I must have a larger field, wherein to sweat, and labour, and spend my blood; the extremity of the pains and sufferings, which I am to undergo, will deserve a greater reward than a few *Israelites*. God the Father consented to this request of Christ, and enlarged his terms. Ver. 6. *I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.* It is as if God the Father had said; if thou art not willing to take a body of flesh, to bear sin, to labour and suffer, and to bleed to death, for the elect in one single nation; thou shalt have thy heart's desire, thou shalt have all the elect *Gentiles*, as well as the elect *Jews*, as the price of thy blood, and thou shalt cover, with thy healing and refreshing wings, all sick and weary souls, to the very ends of the earth. We have here the way and manner of the covenant, which was made between God the Father and Christ; God the Father made proposals, the Son complain'd of the narrowness of the proposals, and then God the Father enlarged them, to his full content and satisfaction.

2. I shall prove, that Christ consented to the proposals, which God the Father made to him, and engag'd to perform the conditions, which were required of him, Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, my ears hast thou open'd: Burnt offering and sin offering thou hast not requir'd.* Then said *I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.* The words of the Psalmist are applyed to Christ by the apostle, *Heb. x. 7.* In the words there is a reply to a foregoing enquiry, about finding out something, which might supply the defect of all the Levitical sacrifices, in taking away sin, ver. 5. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.* Christ willingly undertook, to do that, by the shedding his blood, which could never be brought about by the blood of goats and bulls. *Lo, I come: I delight to do thy will, O my God.* It was with the greatest willingness that Christ consented, to come into the world, to satisfy for sin, and to save sinners by his death. The reason why Christ, with delight, fulfill'd the will of God; in the salvation of his people, was, not only because his name stood upon record, in the book of God's secret, irreversible decree, and because he was most willing in himself to do it; but also, because he was bound to do so by his covenant engagement. *In the volume of the book*

it is written of me: yea, thy law is within my heart. It is as if he had said, I most freely come to do the work of a Redeemer, because of the covenant engagement, whereby I have bound my self to do it.

In that great prayer, which our Lord made before his death, in the seventeenth chapter of *John's Gospel*, we may observe, that he breaths out his pure and affectionate desires and requests to God the Father, in a covenant strain, and claims something as his due; this claim of Christ proves there was a promise annexed to some antecedent condition, which being performed by Christ, gave him a right to demand the promised reward.

II. *Of the relation Christ stood in, when God the Father made a covenant with him, and when the covenant was made.*

I shall now proceed to shew, in what relation Christ stood when God the Father made a covenant with him; and when this great and wonderful transaction pass'd between the divine Persons.

I. I shall shew, in what relation Christ stood, when God the Father made a covenant with him: he stood in the relation of the head of all the elect, and as the second *Adam*. God the Father covenanted with Christ, as he represented all the elect, and as they were all in him, and under him, as their common federal head.

head. As the covenant which God the Father made with Christ was a fruit of election, so it bears an exact proportion to it, in its order: Christ was first, in order of nature, chose in God's eternal decree of election, and then they, who were to be saved by him, were chosen in him, *Eph. i. 4.* *According as he has chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world.* God first chose Christ, to be the Redeemer of a peculiar people, to be the captain of their salvation, and covenanted with him, as their head; and then he made choice of a select company to be redeemed by him, to follow him as their leader, and covenanted with them, as they were in him representatively, and as they were his seed.

II. I shall shew when God the Father made a covenant with Christ, as the second *Adam*, and with all the elect in him: it was from eternity, that he made a covenant with Christ, as he was the second *Adam*, and the head of all the elect. There was a covenant transaction, from eternity, between God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, concerning the salvation of the elect: As God the Father did not begin in time, to design and seek out a Redeemer, so Christ did not begin in time, to consent to undertake the work of a Redeemer. Christ was indeed manifested in the last times: but he was fore-ordained of God, before the foundation of the world, to be a lamb without spot or blemish, to redeem sinners by

his blood. *1 Pet. i. 19, 20.* *You were redeem'd with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot, who was fore-ordin'd before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in the last times for you.*

There are four things which prove the eternal date of the covenant, which God made with Christ.

1. It is called an everlasting covenant, *2 Sam. xxiii. 5.* *Thou hast made with me an everlasting covenant:* it was in time that *David* was personally brought in covenant with God, and yet the covenant, which God made with him, was an everlasting covenant; because, before all time, it was made with Christ, as *David's* federal head: it was from everlasting, that the covenant was made with *David*, as he was represented by Christ, and was in him, as his federal head.

2. The eternity of God's promise, proves the covenant which God the Father made with Christ, to be eternal, *Tit. i. 2.* *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised, before the world began.* Eternal life was promised, before the world began. It may be asked, to whom was it promised? I answer, it was not promised to believers, in their own persons, because they had no personal subsistence, before the world began; no promise could be made to them, before they existed; but eternal life was promised to Christ, for

for the elect, before the world began : It was not promised to Christ, abstractedly, as the second Person in the Trinity, but as the second Person, relatively considered, or as he was the representative, or covenanting head, of all the elect. The promise of eternal life was made to Christ, before the world began, as he was the head of all the elect. There was not only a promise of eternal life made to Christ, but grace was given to Christ, before the world began. All grace was first promised, and first given to Christ, for the elect, *2 Tim. i. 9. Who has saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* It may be said, how was grace given us, in Christ Jesus, before the world began ? It was given in Christ, as he was our covenant head, or as God made a covenant with all the elect in him : God, before the world began, treasured and stored up, for the elect, a fulness of all grace in Christ Jesus, as a covenant was made with them in him, and as he engages to lay it out upon them, in time, when they should be recipient subjects of it.

4. If the salvation of the elect had not been founded, and settled on a covenant between God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, from eternity, then elect persons, under the old Testament ministration, could not

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have been saved; because there could have been no salvation for them, without a promise of grace; but there could have been no promise of grace, to save them, before the incarnation of Christ, if the method of their salvation had not been stated, by a covenant transaction, before time. If Christ had not consented to be a surety, and if he had not undertaken the work of a redeemer, 'till he came into the world, then there could have been no promise of saving sinners, under the old Testament; because the consent of Christ, to be their surety and redeemer, could not have been given, but would have been uncertain, till he came in the flesh.

If God the Father made a covenant with Christ, and with us in him, from eternity, then the meditations of this covenant ought to provoke us to love and thankfulness, to God the Father and to Jesus Christ. The first thoughts of the covenant of grace, by which we are saved, did not rise up in our breasts, but in the heart of God; and it was transacted between the Father and the Son, long before it was possible for us to have any thoughts of it. Our thoughts and apprehensions of it are late and of yesterday; but it was in action, between the Father and the Son, from everlasting: This ought to be the most persuasive argument and motive, of our love and gratitude, to God the Father, and Jesus Christ.

(1.) Our

(1.) Our supreme affections ought to be engaged to God the Father, because his love, or good will, was the eternal spring of that covenant by which we have salvation, through Jesus Christ. The covenant which God made with Christ, tarryed not for our consent, but was from the free-will of God, who is the sovereign incontrolable Lord of our wills, and gave us to Christ, when we had no being, and could have no capacity to know it. The reason why God captivates and draws our wills in time, to submit to his holy will, is because of his everlasting love towards us. *Jer. xxxi. 3.*
I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. God the Father provided a rich inheritance, to be in readiness for us, before we were poor; he prepared a physician for us, before we were sick, he found out a redeemer for us, before we were lost, he appointed a deliverer for us, before we were in bondage, and he agreed with a surety, to pay our debts, before we were bankrupts. What love was it in God, to have his heart fill'd from eternity with thoughts of good-will and peace towards us, and to find out a redeemer for us!

(2.) Our whole souls ought to be enflamed with love to Christ, who spoke kindly for us, when we could not be present to speak for our selves, who became a surety for us, when we could not seek him, and undertook to redeem us, when we could no more

desire his favour, than we could deserve his friendship. There was as much good-will in the consent of Christ to redeem us, as there was free-love in the proposals God the Father made him, about our redemption. When Christ agreed and consented to shed his blood for sin, what love was it in him, to look to us, whom he foresaw would bring ourselves into a polluted state, and into a wretched condition? why did he engage to bear sin, and to die for it upon the cross, any more for us, than for many others, who are left to sink into hell, under the burden of their own guilt?

III. *Of the nature of the covenant of grace.*

I come now to shew, of what kind and nature the covenant is, which God the Father made with Christ: It is to be considered two ways. *viz.* In respect of Christ; and in respect of us.

I. If it be considered in respect of Christ, it is a covenant of works. The conditions of the covenant, which Christ perform'd, were most perfect, because they were not only meritorious, *virtute compacti*, as Adam's obedience would have been to the law of God, if he had stood, and because they answered the requiries of the law in its utmost purity; but they had the highest perfection of a real intrinsic merit in them, as they were the actions and

and sufferings of an infinite Person, in obedience to the law of God, and so bore the most exact and adequate proportion to the reward of eternal life. There was a perfect equality of justice between the conditions, which Christ, as a surety, perform'd, and the rewards which God dispenses to us, for his sake, and upon his account. Upon the performance of the conditions, Christ could challenge glory and happiness, not only for himself as mediator, but for all his seed, for whom he perform'd the conditions. Vindictive justice could exact no more of sinners than what Christ suffered, and remunerative justice could bestow no less than the blessedness of heaven, which Christ purchased by his active obedience. There was a proportion and equality of the strictest justice between the sins committed by us, and the satisfaction made for them by Christ, and between the reward of eternal life, which he purchased for us, and the obedience which he performed. The covenant which God the Father made with Christ, must be said to be, in respect of his active and passive obedience, a covenant of works in the completest sense.

II. If the covenant, which God the Father made with Christ, be considered in respect to us, it is a covenant of grace, which is absolutely free. In this covenant, with respect to us, all grace is in God the Father, because he freely gives all to us; and all worth is in Jesus

230 OF THE COVENANT

Christ, because he purchased all for us, by the transcendence of his obedience. We only have a right and title to heaven as it is God's free gift to us through Christ, *Rom. vi. 23.* *The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.* The reward of the heavenly glory is of pure grace to us, as it is the free gift of God; but it was a reward of debt to Christ, because he purchased it for us, by doing and suffering all that could be demanded, and enjoyned by God, as a righteous lawgiver. The covenant, which God the Father made with Christ, is with respect to us, a covenant of the most free and sovereign grace, because in this covenant, all that conduces to our recovery, and our eternal glorification, is promised to us, through Jesus Christ, as a free gift.

There is a question, which may here be ask'd, it is this; Is the covenant of grace one, or not? To this question I answer: The covenant of grace is one, and not two: We must distinguish between the making of the covenant of grace, and the revelation of it, because the making and the manifesting it are two things. The covenant of grace was made by God the Father with Christ, from eternity; but there have been various and different revelations of it in time.

1. It was revealed, in the absolute freeness of the grace of it, to *Adam*, in the promise

of the seed of the woman, *Gen. iii. 15. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* *Adam*, by the command and direction of God, taught his posterity to add bloody sacrifices to the revelation of the covenant of grace, which was made to him, that they might see the necessity of the shedding the blood of the promised Messias, for the remission of their sins.

2. The revelation of the covenant of grace was enlarged to the patriarchs, after the flood; and when God repeated the revelation of it to *Abraham*, he joined to it the sign of circumcision, as a confirming seal of the righteousness of Faith, which *Abraham*, and his believing seed, were to receive from Christ, as the head and surety of the covenant of grace. This may be seen at large, *Gen. xvii.*

3. When the seed of *Abraham*, in the time of *Moses*, were erected and form'd into a civil state, and a national church, the covenant of grace was veiled and clouded, under the Levitical ministration. And that by figurative and typical ordinances; by means and institutions, which were, in themselves, insufficient to answer the great ends design'd by the covenant of grace; viz. the forgiveness of sins, and the reconciliation of sinners to God, by the blood of Christ; by the conditionality of works, which made the covenant of grace bear the appearance of a legal covenant; and by promises of temporal

232 OF THE COVENANT

ral blessings, to encourage to external obedience. By the aforesaid ways, the revelation of the covenant of grace was obscured, under the Levitical ministration; but it was then apply'd by the Spirit of God, in its absolute nature, to all the elect, who lived under the ceremonial law, before the coming of Christ.

4. Under the new Testament ministration, the covenant of grace has been revealed with greatest clearness, by the open exhibition of Christ, by his actual fulfilling all the conditions of it, and giving it the most authentic ratification, by the sacrifice of himself. The revelation of the covenant of grace, under the ceremonial law was so dark and defective, and the revelation of it, under the new Testament, is so clear and expressive, that the same covenant, because of the different relations of it, is spoke of, in the scriptures, as two covenants, under the titles of the new and old.

The covenant of grace hath had various and different revelations in time; but it is one: As there was but one covenant of works, of which the first *Adam* was the head, and which he broke; so there is but one covenant of grace, of which Christ, as he is the second *Adam*, is the head, and he hath fulfill'd all the conditions of it.

It may be ask'd, whether there is not a real difference, between what several divines call the covenant of redemption, or suretiship, made by God the Father with Christ, and that which they call the covenant of grace, or reconciliation, made by God with believers through Christ. To this I answer: Custom, without reason, has given a sort of sanction to this way of speaking, and many persons of great piety and learning have fallen into it, without considering the bad use men of corrupt minds would make of it, in turning what they call the covenant of grace, into a more rigorous covenant of works to us, than *Adam's* covenant was. The distinction of the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace, is a distinction without any real and material difference: it is to make two covenants of grace, of one. The covenant of redemption, as it is called and described by them, who say it is a distinct covenant, is of pure grace. This may be proved by three things.

1. Election, which is the original spring of the covenant made with Christ, is of free grace. The grace of election is not only the infallible security of our salvation, but it is the cause of the covenant that God made with Jesus Christ. Christ procured, by way of merit, all the grace of the covenant, but he did not procure the covenant it self, because the covenant

venant was originally, from the grace of election, in God the Father.

2. That which moved God the Father to enter into a federal agreement with Christ, about the salvation of the elect, and that which induced Christ to undertake for them, was pure sovereign grace. God the Father, with the greatest justice, might have resolved to proceed, according to the law of the covenant of works, with all the breakers of it: he had no superior, and there was none to constrain him to alter his course. The giving and sending Christ to be a redeemer, was of grace. So also none could compel Christ to engage, as a surety, for sinners, more than for the false angels; what he did was done freely, and graciously, without compulsion and coaction. There was no cause, reason, argument, or motive from without, and there was no necessity of nature from within, to make God the Father and Christ enter into a covenant for our redemption; but it was in both, from mere grace and good pleasure.

3. The design of God and Christ, in that which is termed the covenant of redemption, was all grace. That which was uppermost in the heart of God the Father and of Christ, in the covenant, which was made between them, was to bring many sons to glory. *Heb. ii. 10. It became him of whom are all things, and by whom are all things,*

in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect, thro' sufferings. As the end of the covenant God the Father made with Christ, was the highest illustration of all his attributes, or divine perfections, so it was for the fullest communion of his grace to sinners, in bringing them into a near eternal union and communion with himself. As all the honor of the covenant, which was made with Christ, accrues to God, as it was transacted to the praise of the glory of his grace, so all the good and profit of it redounds to us.

IV. *Of the stipulations of the Father, and the restipulations of Christ, in the covenant of Grace.*

I shall now shew, what were the stipulations of God the Father, and what were the restipulations of Jesus Christ, in the covenant which was made between them.

I. I shall shew, what were the stipulations of God the Father, to Jesus Christ, when he made the covenant of grace with him. God the Father stipulated or engaged, to do several things.

1. God the Father engaged, to furnish Christ, when he became man with every thing necessary to qualify and fit him for the work of a Redeemer and Savior, *Isa. xi. 2.* *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,* *the*

the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord. Christ was to have wisdom to judge of things, according to the divine will, counsel and prudence to direct him, in all his mediatory undertakings, knowledge to foresee all contingencies, might to perform the whole of his work, and the fear of the Lord to move him, to observe all his covenant engagements. It was for the aforesaid ends, that, when Christ appeared in the flesh, God gave him the Spirit above measure, *John* iii. 34. *God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him.* Christ was filled with all the Graces of the Spirit; when he had a fulness of duration, he had a fulness above measure.

2. God the Father engaged, to protect and uphold Christ in his work, *Zech.* iii. 9. *Behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua, upon one stone shall be seven eyes.* Two interpretations are given of this prophetical speech: one is, that the eyes of all believing souls shall be upon Christ Jesus. As he is a chosen stone, so he is more and more precious to believers, the oftener they behold him. Believers see the greatest reason to turn their eyes from all other things, and to look more intently and steadily upon him; when they look to other things, they shall be disappointed; but when they look to him, they shall be enlightened and comforted. But the words seem

seem rather to be a promise from God the Father to Jesus Christ. As seven is a number of perfection, and is put for all numbers, so it notes the infinite knowlege of God, and consequently the perfect care which he engaged to take of Christ, in finishing the work of our redemption. *Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.* It is as if God had said, my eyes shall be perpetually fixed upon him, as I delight in him, so I will always take care of him, when he shall be in the world, about the salvation of the elect. God promised to be with Christ, till he had laid the foundation stone of our redemption, by his death, and the top stone of it, by his exaltation, *Isai. xlvi.*
6. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and I will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles.

3. God the Father engaged, to hear Christ always, in all the requests he was to offer up to God, as a mediator, and to honor him, as faithful to his trust, *Joh. xi. 42. I knew that thou hearest me always.* The assurance which Christ had, of being always heard, presuppos'd a promise made to him by God the Father, of hearkening always to his call, and of granting all his requests. God stood bound, by his covenant promise, to hear Christ always, to strengthen him to perfect the work of a redeemer, to justify him in the Spirit, and to de-

declare him to have done every thing legally, by warrant, and according to order.

4. God the Father engaged, to invest Christ with royal authority and dignity, that when he was to be a priest, he might also be a king. *Psalm. xlv. 6, 7. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a righteous scepter. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Christ has a natural right to all sovereignty and dominion, as he is God, and the creator of all things; and he has besides a right of acquisition to it, by appointment and purchase, as mediator. He is now both Lord and Christ, *Acts ii. 36. God has made the same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ.* It was God's covenant promise to confer a supreme royal dignity on Christ mediator, and he hath fulfilled his promise, in exalting Christ far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

5. God the Father engaged, to crown Christ with a triumphant victory over all his enemies, *Psalm lxxii. 9. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust.* *Psalm cx. 1. The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou at my right hand,*

hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool. All they who are haters of truth and holiness, are Christ's enemies, and they shall, and must be trod under his feet: when they are high and lifted up in this world, the eminence of their station is so far from being any security to them, that it makes them fitter marks for the crushing thunder of Christ's almighty power. The end of all Christ's enemies will be most fearful: They may spit upon him now, and persecute him in his members, but they must at last, either bow before him, or be for ever broke by him. If we would avoid the greatest judgments in this world, and a weight of endless misery in the other world, we must not be found among Christ's enemies, because their damnation slumbers not, but hastens towards them.

6. God the Father engaged, to glorify Christ as mediator, for ever. As Christ was to have authority, by command, to lay down his life, so he was to have a power, by covenant stipulation, to take it up again, for a glorious resurrection, *John x. 18. No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of my self: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again: this commandment I have received of my Father.* Christ was under a covenant engagement, to God the Father, to lay down his life, and upon his performing this condition, he was to rise again. As the enduring the pain of the

the cross, was a covenant agreement on Christ's part, so the crowning him with glory, was a covenant stipulation on God's part. The sufferings of Christ were to go before, and his mediatorial glory was to follow, *1 Pet. i. 11. The Spirit testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow.*

7. God the Father engaged, to satisfy Christ with a seed, *Isai. liii. 10, 11. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.* The promise of a seed to Christ, by virtue of a pre-contrat, is so evident, from this place, that *Arminius*, as well as some papists of note, confess that a covenant between God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, may be proved from the words. Here is a promise that Christ, upon the travail of his soul, and upon his being made an offering for sin, was to see his seed, and to be satisfied. God the Father covenanted, that Christ should have a flock to feed, as a shepherd, members to quicken, as a vital head, a spouse to cherish as a tender husband, children to nourish, as a father, and subjects to govern, as a king. Christ had the promise of a numerous seed, that was to be gathered to him from the most distant parts, *Isai. xlivi. 5, 6. I will bring thy seed from the East, and gather them from the West. I will say to the North give up, and to the South keep not back: bring*

bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. Something of this promise was accomplished, soon after the crucifixion of Christ. In the eleventh year of *Nero*, which was thirty one years after Christ, *Rome* it self, the metropolis of the empire (as *Tacitus* says) abounded with Christians. There is a time coming, when Christ will bring in his full harvest: he must have the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession. God the Father stands engaged, by his covenant promise, to draw sinners to Christ, *Isai. lv. 5.* *Nations that knew not thee, shall run to thee, because of the Lord thy God, for he has glorified thee.* The running of nations to Christ, is refer'd to God the Father, as a fruit of his irresistible power. Christ's kingdom must be set up in all parts of the world; if his subjects should perish, of what would he be king? If his members should be destroyed, of what would he be head? When Christ will cut off rebels and persecutors, by the power of his arm, he will bring into his fold elect sinners, by the breath of his mouth. God has made Christ strong for himself, *Psalm lxxx. 17.* Why has God made Christ strong for himself? I answer, That he may stand and feed his sheep, in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, that they may abide, and that he may be great to the ends of the earth, *Micah v. 4.*

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When God the Father has given a seed to Christ, to be the objects of his care, it necessarily follows, that this seed must in time be called, converted, justified, renewed, and sanctified, because all such as the Father has given to Christ, must come to him. As Christ has a sufficiency of merit, to redeem the seed, so he has a sovereign almighty power, to turn them from darkness to light, and to make them willing to take up and bear his yoke.

II. I shall shew, what were the restipulations of Christ, to God the Father, in the covenant of grace. When Christ accepted the conditions which God the Father propounded to him, in the covenant of grace, he restipulated or engaged on his part to do several things.

1. Christ restipulated to undertake for all the elect, as their common head, and to deliver them out of the deplorable condition, into which he foresaw they would fall. The first *Adam* fell from righteousness, to be a lover of iniquity, and brought all his posterity, as they sinned in him, and were under him, as their head, to be children of wrath, or to be under the displeasure of God; but Christ, as he was the second *Adam*, was to love righteousness, to redeem his people from all iniquity, and to repair the honour of God, when it was injured by their sins.

2. Christ restipulated to obey the will of God the Father, and to act in obedience to him as a servant, *Isai. 1. 5. The Lord God has*

opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. Christ was not God's servant, as a bought slave, but he was his servant by covenant agreement, he was his servant most willingly, by free consent, and of his own accord : his ear was to be open, according to the *Jewish* custom of boring the ear ; he was to be swift to hear, and ready to obey.

3. Christ restipulated to take a body, at a set time, which is called the fulness of time. *Gal. iv. 4, 5. When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.* Christ covenanted to take a body, at the appointed time, for three reasons.

(1.) Christ covenanted to take a body, that he might have something like us, when he was the same with God. If he had been only man, he would have been infinitely distant from God, and if he had been only God, he would have been altogether and inconceivably above us ; but there was a necessity, in regard of us, that he should be God-man, that so he might retain his infinite superiority over us, and yet be near to us. When he had the divine nature, which was offended, he was to assume the nature of man, which was the nature offending ; that when he perfectly knew the excellence of God, and consequently the greatness of the

offence done against him, he might also experimentally and sensibly know the miseries contracted by them, who were the offenders against God, and might be inclined to have boundless and infinite compassions for them.

(2.) Christ covenanted to take a body, that when he had the power of the most high God, he might have the affections of a man; that when he was to be victorious, he might be compassionate; and that when he was to tread his enemies under his feet, he might forbear, and commiserate his wandering and backsliding people.

(3.) Christ covenanted to take a body, that he might suffer and die for his people. If he had been only God, he could not have suffered and died for us, and if he had been mere man, he could never have satisfied for sin, by suffering death: He was to be God and man, that when he suffered, and was a sacrifice for sin, he might be able to bear and endure the wrath of God, as the penalty of the broken law, and that his sufferings might be infinitely meritorious, and so be as a sweet favour, to the provoked justice of God. Christ consented to take a body, even a mortal body, because blood was to be shed, and death was to be endured: It was as necessary for him to have a body of flesh, to be a sacrifice for sin, as it was for him to be God, that as a priest, he might make expiation for it: If he had been without a body, he would have been a priest

priest without a sacrifice; and if he had not been God, he would have been a priest without a meritorious sacrifice; but when he had a body, that he might have a sacrifice, he was the true God, that he might offer up a sacrifice of infinite worth and merit.

4. Christ restipulated to submit to the shameful and painful death of the cross, and to undergo the wrathful displeasure of God, as the proper reward of sin, for the salvation of the elect. As Christ was to humble himself in becoming man, so he was to become obedient to death, when he was found in the fashion of a man; *Phil. ii. 8. Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.* He was to submit to death, as a thing he had engaged to undergo, and therefore his death is said to be predetermin'd, or unalterably fixed, before all time; *Luke xxii. 22. Truly the Son of man goeth, (viz. to suffer death) as it was determin'd.* Christ's death was determin'd, and because of the pre-determination of it, it was necessary, *Luke xxiv. 26. Ought not Christ to have suffered such things, and to enter into his glory?* It was necessary, by covenant agreement, for Christ to die, and then, after he had suffered death, to enter into glory: God required his death, as a sacrifice for sin, exclusive of all other sacrifices, that he might glorify his justice in the punishment of sin, and that he

246 OF THE COVENANT, &c.

might magnify his mercy in the salvation of sinners.

Christ engaged in the covenant of grace, which God the Father made with him, to change places with his seed, and to put himself into their stead: he promised to become sin for them, that he might bear what he knew their sins would deserve, that so they might be made righteous in him, and reap what he should merit; *2 Cor. v. 21. He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Christ yielded to a commutation of places, with them whom he was to redeem: He consented to put himself into their place, that he might bear their sin, as well as their punishment, and that they might not only be delivered from the suffering of all evil, but might be made the righteousness of God in him, and have the enjoyment of all good, and of the chiefest good, for ever.

24 OC 62



OF

OF
CHRIST, as he is the SURETY
Of the
Covenant of GRACE:





OF
CHRIST, the SURETY
OF THE
COVENANT of GRACE.

HEB. vii. 22.

By so much was Jesus made the surety
of a better testament.

IT would be a very high act of friendship, in one man, to take upon him the incumbrances of another, who knows no way to extricate himself from his intangling difficulties ; but it would be still a more extraordinary act of friendship, in a man, before he be desired, or asked, to become responsible for all the debts and crimes of another,

ther, whom he knows has neither power, nor will, to reward him; but upon his being set free, will make no other returns to him, than ingratitude for his kindness, contempt for his compassion, and hatred for his love: If we could suppose a man could be found to do this, it would be a piece of superlative amity; yet it would bear no proportion to the friendship of Christ, in becoming the surety of the covenant of grace, for his people: It was from everlasting that he became a surety for them, when they had no more a capacity to request him, than they had a power to lay him under obligations to do it. As it was from eternity, that he became the surety of the covenant of grace, so it was in time, that he came to do the work of a surety for his seed, that he might release them, when they were in prison, discharge them, when they were much in debt, and had nothing to pay, and make a compensation to the justice of God for their sins, when they were not only in a state of impotence, and could do nothing to avert the anger of God from themselves, but were in a state of enmity against God, and gave him fresh provocations to destroy them, by new acts of hostility.

The author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* proves at large, that the priesthood of Christ transcended, without comparison, that of *Aaron*. One thing wherein the priesthood of Christ excell'd the Levitical priesthood, was

was because it was confirmed by the oath of God, and thereby made unchangeable and eternal; ver. 20, 21. *Not without an oath he was made a priest, for those priests, (viz. the Levitical priests) were made without an oath, but this priest with an oath, by him that said to him, the Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck.* The oath of God gave the greatest firmness to the priesthood of Christ, or rendered it unchangeable and eternal; and from the unchangeableness and eternity of the priesthood of Christ, the apostle, in the words of the text, infers the stability of the covenant of grace, of which Christ is the surety. *By so much was Jesus made the surety of a better testament, or covenant.* The word *Διαθήκη*, which is here translated testament, signifies a covenant, as well as a testament, and is so turned in other places, *Acts* iii. 25. *The covenant (or testament) God made with our fathers, Heb. xii. 24. To Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, or new testament.*

The doctrinal proposition, which I shall raise from the words, is this;

Jesus Christ is the surety of the covenant of grace.

In speaking to this doctrinal truth, I shall do three things.

I. I shall shew, what we are to understand by a surety. And in what respect Christ is the surety of the covenant of grace.

II. I shall shew, wherein Christ, as a surety, differs from all sureties among men.

III. I shall shew, what advantages redound, from the suretiship of Christ, to his people.

I. *Of a surety, and how Christ is the surety of the covenant of grace.*

I shall in the first place shew what we must understand by a surety ; and in what respects Christ is the surety of the covenant of grace. A surety in the known, common acceptation of grammarians, lawyers, and the best divines, is one who undertakes for another, and promises or binds himself, to make satisfaction for him. A surety is one who puts himself into the stead and place of another, in the eye of the law, that he may give credit and assurance for him, and in case of his personal deficiency, answer all the demands of the law for him. This we are to understand by a surety. Now it may be proper to consider, in what respect Christ is the surety of

the covenant of grace: He is the surety of the covenant of grace in a double sense: He may be said to be a surety for God to us, but he is, properly, a surety for his people to God.

I. Christ may be said to be a surety for God to us, as he treats with us for God, and brings a message of love from God to us. It is for this reason that he is called the messenger, or angel, of the covenant, *Mal. iii. 1.* As Christ is the messenger or angel of the covenant, he not only reveals the secrets of God to us, but he engages, on God's part, that all the great and glorious things promised in the covenant of grace, shall be granted, and freely given to us. As Christ is the surety of the covenant from God to us, all the promises are yea, and Amen in him, to the glory of God, *2 Cor. i. 20.* *All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God.* All the promises of the covenant are yea and Amen in Christ, or have the most firm, strong, and authentic ratification in him, as he assures us that whatsoever God has promised shall be made good, and that God will give a reasonable being, and birth, to all the blessings of the covenant of grace, that as streams from a living fountain or spring, they may flow out to us.

II. Christ is properly a surety for his people to God: when he is their advocate to plead their cause, he is their surety to pay all their debts: He stipulated with God the Father,
to

to make a full payment of all the debts his people should contract in time, whether debts of duty, by way of obedience, or debts of suffering, by way of penalty; and when he came into the world, he answered his covenant engagement; he made payment of their debts of obedience, by his own perfect obedience to the preceptive part of the law; and he made payment of their debts of penal sufferings, by undergoing the penalty, which the law required, as a satisfaction for sin to the justice of God. Christ, as he is the surety of his people to God, took their legal station, and fulfill'd the law they had broke.

1. Christ, as he is the surety of his people to God, took their legal station, or their place in law, he put himself under the law in their stead, and took upon him their sins, that all the hard and rigorous conditions of the law might lie upon him, and that he might free them from the arrest of justice, *Isai. liii.*
7. *He was oppressed, he was afflicted:* The words may be rendred thus, *it was exacted, and he answered.* When God required satisfaction for sin, Christ, as the surety of his people, answered for them, and said, let the punishment of their sins be exacted of me, I will bear it; let the violated law make its strictest demands, I will answer and satisfie them; let it bring forth all its bills, I will pay them; let provoked justice strike without sparing, I will receive all its strokes; and let avenging

avenging wrath be poured out without mitigation, I will endure it.

2. Christ as he is the surety of his people to God, fulfill'd the law for them, not only by doing all that the law could require of them, by way of duty, but also by suffering all that the law could exact of them, by way of suffering. When God had charged all the sins of the elect upon Christ, he inflicted on him the punishment deserved by sin; as a creditor, who having charged a debt upon a surety apprehends him in the room of the debtor, casts him into prison, and demands and exacts satisfaction from him. When the sins of the elect were laid upon Christ, the punishment of their sins was legally transfer'd to him, *Gal. iii. 13.* *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* Christ was made a curse for his people, and bore the punishment of their sins, that he might take away the curse from them, and that no punishment for their sins might come upon them. Christ, as the surety of his people, was cast into the furnace of divine wrath, was made the mark of God's vengeance, and bore all the strokes of his armed justice, which were too sharp and heavy for the united strength of all the angels in heaven to bear; that he might vindicate the injured holiness of God, satisfy his offended justice, for the breach of the law of the covenant of works, turn away his judicial anger

anger from his people, and reconcile them to God.

II. *How Christ as a surety differs from sureties among men.*

I shall now shew wherein Christ, as a surety, differs from all sureties among men. The suretiship of Christ has that in it which is as peculiar and singular, as it is wonderful. Christ, as he is a surety for his people to God, differs from all sureties among men two ways.

I. Among men, the debtor first, or principally, and then the surety secondarily, enter into one bond of performance to the creditor. The surety gives the debtor credit, by strengthening the security which is given, and becomes bound to pay the debt, if the debtor either will not, or cannot do it. Sureties among men, who are sincere in what they undertake, are bound both in law and conscience, to pay the debts, for which they engage, if the debtors themselves prove deficient, either through dishonesty, or inability. When sureties among men reckon not themselves bound to do this, they serve only to supplant and beguile the innocent, and to support them who are the worst thieves and robbers. It is for this reason, that all persons of probity, should be exceeding cautious and wary, how they become sureties for their friends. *Prov. xxii. 26. Be not thou one of*

of them that strike hands, or of them who are sureties for debts. It is too often that upright persons, by being sureties for others, bring trouble and outward distress on themselves and their families. Sureties among men take the debts upon themselves, in a law sense, for which they are bound, if the debtors fail to make payment; but this is not the primary and immediate intention of the most generous sureties, because their principal design is, to give credit to the debtors, for whom they become bound, and they hope the debtors will pay their own debts: it is so with sureties among men; but Christ, as he is the surety of the covenant of grace, became, by his own consent, the principal debtor, and engaged to pay all the debts of the elect: As it was infinite love in him to do this, so there was a necessity, on their side, for Christ to do it, that he might prevent their misery. When he entered into suretiship for them, if they had been capable (as they were not) to have given bond for themselves, their bond would have been of no value or worth.

If Christ had left the least and smallest part of the debts of the elect, which he foresaw they would contract, to have been paid by them, they would never have been paid; and so for non-payment they must for ever have lain in prison, without release, and endured the wrath of God everlasting, as they who are in hell must do. All they for whom

Christ became surety, have many debts to pay to God, by way of gratulation, but not one debt by way of satisfaction. There will be no end of paying their debts of thankfulness and love to God, for the gift of a surety; but no claim of justice can lie against them for debts of satisfaction, because they have been all paid by Christ already.

II. Among men the creditor may seize upon either the debtor, or surety, as he judges most fit, to answer his end, for obtaining satisfaction; but in the covenant of grace, as Christ took upon himself all the debts of the elect, so God the Father look'd only to Christ, and exacted satisfaction for them all from him, as a surety. The curse of the law, in the desert of it, lies upon all elect sinners, 'till it be removed from them by Christ; but the curse of the law, in the execution of it, fell first, and only, on Christ, as a surety. The curse of the law, in the execution of it, did not first fall upon the elect, and afterwards on Christ to extort and get out of him what was not to be had in them; but it fell only upon Christ. The sharp and flaming sword of justice struck only, and first at Christ, and will never turn back upon them, for whom he was struck and wounded as a surety, because in his blood it has lost both its sharp edge, and burning quality.

III. Among men the surety is many times as unable to pay or make satisfaction as the debtor. One cheat engages for another, and so by concert they agree to deceive and disappoint them who trust them. As this is a premeditated fraud, so it is a most aggravated violation of justice: it is the greatest violence done to the very law of nature, of which all men have something written upon their hearts, as well as to the perfect law of God, which is written in his word. To get others bound for debts which we never intend to pay ourselves, is a sin inconsistent with the lowest degree of grace; but it is a great addition to this sin, when we get others bound for us, who, we know beforehand, have no more will or power to pay them than we have ourselves: this is a complicated work of darkness, of which none can be guilty and not repent of it who are light in the Lord. It is frequent among men that the surety is as insufficient and unwilling to make satisfaction, as the debtor, and so he stains his soul with the guilt of a crying sin, to free another as wicked as himself from a temporary suffering; but our Lord Jesus Christ is a surety that made legal satisfaction to the utmost for all the debts charg'd upon him, and it was not possible that he could prove insolvent and unresponsible: he finish'd the work which God gave him to do, *John xvii. 4. I have glorified thee on earth: I have*

have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. When Christ made this great prayer to God the Father, he had finished the work of his obedience to the preceptive part of the law ; and when he came to groan, bleed, and expire on the cross, he compleated the work of his obedience to the penal part of the law, and with a triumphing shout, cry'd, *it is finished*, before he bow'd his head and died, John xix. 30. *He said it is finished: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.*

IV. Among men the surety is allowed satisfaction from the debtor, for all the losses and damages he has sustain'd, upon his account ; but Christ neither expects, nor demands, any reparation, or recompence from believers : He looks for no reward from them for all his pains and trouble, sorrows and sufferings : All which he seeks is that they accept of his love, live in the thankful sense of it, and not by their voluntary and deliberate sins obscure the glory of his rich grace, which he hath made most conspicuous and illustrious, by his satisfaction.

V. Among men, when the surety pays the debt, he cannot take away the inherent blot, vitiosity, and injustice of the debtor : he discharges him from the penalty of the law ; but he is so far from being able to make the debtor a man of virtue and integrity, that he may still remain unjust, perfidious, and be more prepar'd than before, to multiply his me-

thods of deceit, without trouble or regret; but Christ is such a surety, that when he pays all the debts of his people, he infuses into them all the principles of inherent righteousness and holiness: when he redeems them from God's wrath, he imprints on them God's image; when he exempts them from the severity of the law, he implants in them a new nature; and when he justifies, he also sanctifies them, *1 Cor. vi. 11. Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

III. *Of the Advantages redounding from Christ's suretiship.*

Having thus explain'd the nature of Christ's suretiship, I shall proceed to shew, what advantages redound from the suretiship of Christ to his people, in three things.

I. It is by Christ, as he is a surety, that his people are delivered from the condemnation of the law. They are divorc'd from the law, as it is a covenant of works, and are freed from it, as it is a cruel tyrannical husband, *Rom. vii. 4. Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.* The law cannot now pursue, indict, and condemn them that are

in Christ Jesus, because it is by the suretiship of Christ, that believers are delivered from the condemning sentence of the law, *Rom.* viii. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* Christ hath destroy'd the damning power of the law, with respect to all believers; he hath dissolved all the obligations which it laid them under to punishment; he hath turned all its terrible curses into blessings, and hath changed its loud and scaring thunders into the sweet voice of grace and mercy: Christ hath snatch'd his people out of the devouring teeth and jaws of the law, and wrap'd them up in the robe of his own righteousness. The infinite merit of Christ's death must cease to be, and lose its virtue, before the killing power of the law can revive against his members. Christ has taken off from the backs of believers all the insupportable burdens of the law; they are now under the commands of the law, but not under the conditions of it; they are under the directions of the law, as it is a rule of life, but not under the malediction of it, as it is a broken covenant of works.

When we have Christ for our surety, we have no reason to fear any accuser: When he has paid all our debts of obedience, and penal sufferings, who then can contend with us, or commence a law suit against us for non-payment, or non-satisfaction? What Christ has done, as a surety, is the foundation of a believer's

liever's triumph, *Rom. viii. 34. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died.*

II. It is by Christ, as he is a surety, that the salvation of believers is infallibly secured. The salvation of believers, as it is in the hands of Christ, is sure: It is the security of believers that their salvation is not in themselves, but in the hands of Christ, as he is their surety, *John x. 28. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands.* The life of believers is in the hands of Christ, who is unchangeable in his good-will, as well as almighty in his power, and therefore it can never be lost. As none can open when Christ shuts, so none can shut when he opens, *Revel. iii. 7. He has the key of David, he opens and no man can shut, and he shuts and no man can open.*

When Christ is the quickener of his people, he is also their preserver, and he confirms them to the end: they are his vineyard which he waters every moment, and watches night and day, *Isai. xxvii. 23. In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine: I the Lord keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* Christ takes care of his people continually, and will maintain and promote the work of grace in them, till he has brought it to perfection; and then he will say to them as he

does to the Church. Sol. song. iv. 7. *Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee.*

III. Christ, as he is the surety of his people, brings them to a greater happiness, than ever the first *Adam* had to lose: He came not only to restore the life, which the first man had strip'd and deprived us of, but to give us life more abundantly, than we should have had, if the first *Adam* had stood, as our covenant head. *Joh. x. 10. I came that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly:* Christ came to do the work of a surety, that his people might have life more abundantly, not only in the certainty and duration of it, but also in the perfection, felicity, and glory of it. When Christ restored any to health, while he was in the flesh, he made them stronger than they were before; when he did this in healing bodily diseases, he did it much more, in restoring the elect, from their fallen state: He made their condition much better than that of *Adam* in paradise: They have a better head, a firmer standing, a stronger righteousness, a purer life, a more sublimated frame of soul, a more elevated knowledge of God, and of his divine perfections, a more magnificent structure for their dwelling, and a fuller and higher measure of glory.

What infinite grace was it in Christ, not only to restore his people to what they had lost, but to raise them to more than ever they

they had to lose, and to make them better than they were before they fell? What love was it in Christ, not only to recover, but to prefer them; not only to redeem from destruction, but to crown them with a glorious immortality; not only to quench the fire of hell, but to provide a more sumptuous mansion for them, than *Aadm's* earthly paradise; even a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?



OF

24 OC 62

OF
CHRIST, as He is the TESTATOR
Of the
Covenant of GRACE.





OF
CHRIST, the TESTATOR
OF THE
COVENANT OF GRACE.



HEB. ix. 6.

Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

CHRIST, by the sacrifice of his death, and by his entrance into heaven, fulfill'd all that was typified and prefigured by the Jewish high priest, when he offer'd the sacrifice on the brazen altar, which stood before the door of the tabernacle, or temple, and then, with the blood

blood of the sacrifice, enter'd into the most holy place, to sprinkle it on the mercy-seat: When Christ had offer'd up himself as a sacrifice of infinite merit, and eternal efficacy, he rose from the dead; and having broke the bands of death, and triumph'd over the powers of the grave, he, as a mighty conqueror, ascended on high, leading captivity captive, and enter'd into heaven, to plead the virtue of his blood, and to apply to sinners what he had purchased by his death: When he had done the work of a priest, by way of oblation, here on earth, he went to do the work of a priest, by his intercession, in heaven.

The death of Christ, as a testator, was necessary to confirm the covenant of grace, which is his testament. A testament is of force, after the testator is dead. Among men, the inheritance, which is the gift of the testator, can never be sure to his heirs, till he is dead; because while he lives he may cancel his will, and make another, different from, and contrary to that he made before. Christ, as a testator, made his will, and tho' he be invariably of one mind, and given to no change, like all testators among men; yet he died to confirm his testament, and to declare to the heirs of salvation that it is irrevocable, and shall stand in force for ever, without any alteration. Christ by his death made a penal satisfaction to the offended justice

justice of God, as a surety, and he also by his death confirm'd the covenant of grace, as a testator.

The observation, or doctrine, which I shall raise from the words is this;

Jesus Christ, as he is the testator of the covenant of grace, confirm'd it by his death.

In speaking to this doctrine I shall do four things:

I. I shall shew, what Christ did as a testator.

II. I shall shew, who they are that stand heirs in Christ's testament.

III. I shall shew, why Christ, as a testator, died, that he might confirm the covenant of grace which is his testament.

IV. I shall make application.

I. *What Christ did as a testator.*

I shall begin with shewing what Christ did as a testator. Testators among men are they, who under the expectations of death, make their wills, and dispose of their estates in this world, to be enjoy'd after their death, by such as

as they constitute their heirs. This is what testators among men do, and especially parents; when they apprehend the near approach of their death, by their last will they bequeath to their children, the estates they have at their dispose: and they are too often more solicitous about what they must leave to be possess'd by their children in this life, than they are about what must become of their own souls, in the eternal world into which they are going. What testators among men do, may serve to inform us, what Christ did as a testator; Christ having, by his testament, bequeath'd the richest and best inheritance to his heirs, voluntarily submitted to death, that he might give a firm and perpetual ratification to his testament.

I. Christ by his testament, which is the covenant of grace, bequeathed the richest and best inheritance to his heirs. Christ spoke to his disciples, when he had but a short time to converse with them in his human nature, in this world, in a testamentary stile, *Luke xxii. 29. I appoint to you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed to me.* q. d. As my Father has appointed to me a kingdom as mediator, I appoint to you the same kingdom; and I appoint it to you in the same way, *διατίθεμαι*: I bequeath, or will a kingdom to you, as my Father has appointed it to me; I give you a kingdom, by way of testamentary disposal; you shall have it

it as my dying gift, to express my dying love. Earthly parents, by their wills, can only give a small part of the good things of this life to their children, which are slippery, uncertain, of a short duration, and of a narrow and confined extent: It is at best but a mean, diminutive portion, that testators among men can bequeath to their heirs; but Christ, by his testament, settles on his heirs the best and noblest inheritance.

If we would see what the inheritance is which Christ gives to, and settles on, his heirs by his testament, we may take the best view of it, from some things said of it in the scriptures: It is called an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, *1 Pet. i. 4.* The apostle *Peter* having said in the third verse, that according to mercy, even abundant mercy, God the Father had begot believers to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead; he in the fourth verse gives, in a few words, a most heart-affecting description of the inheritance which they have by gift, and by Christ's testament; *to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.* What a glory appears in every epithet given to this inheritance, for the raising believers affections, and comforting their souls? It is incorruptible and undefiled; when there is no losing this inheritance, when it is liable to no

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changes, out of the reach of robbers hands, and not expos'd to any consumption by moth or rust, it is at the same time undefiled; perfect holiness will be the ornament that will deck every blessed soul that comes to the possession of it; it fades not away, and it is reserved in the heavens for us.

The inheritance Christ makes over to his heirs, is call'd a city that has foundations, *Heb. xi. 10. He looked for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* We have here a description of the lively spiritual frame of *Abraham*, the father of the faithful; he looked for a city; when he wander'd about in this world, dwelling only in tents and tabernacles, he looked for a city having firm foundations, *whose builder and maker is God.* This is the inheritance which is given by Christ to his heirs; it is a city which has foundations: all other cities are, in comparison of this, without any foundations, unless it be foundations of sand, which will sink under them, and make their names perish and rot in oblivion; as it has been already with some of the greatest cities that ever were in the world. There is no certainty whereabouts *Nineveh* was, and there is little more than conjecture concerning the place where *Babylon* stood; but the city, which is the inheritance of the saints, has a foundation, and a foundation that cannot be so much as shaken, much less overturn'd. What are the founda-

tions of it? They are God's eternal decree of election, and the work of redemption, which Christ fulfill'd and perfected by his blood and death. These are the foundations whereon the city which is to be the inheritance of believers stands; and they are stronger and firmer than mountains of brass. God is the framer of this city; he is the builder and maker of it; and as it is framed by him, we cannot conceive, much less express, the glory of it. Believers many times wander about in this world, without houses and places of habitation; but this is their comfort, when they have pass'd thro' their wearisom pilgrimage in this world, Christ will bring them to a city: and what a city will that be? A city which is the wonderful contrivance of infinite wisdom, the product of almighty power, and the gift and effect of immense goodness; a city filled with spotless inhabitants, into which no unclean thing shall enter, to which no impure sinner shall approach; a city where there is light shining forth with insuperable brightness, without the least mixture of darkness, eternal tranquility without trouble, joy without sorrow, and unity without discord; a city where there is a fulness of never-fading pleasure, and where all the dwellers will have the clearest sight, and the fullest fruition of God, and so shall behold all that is superlatively glorious, and shall enjoy, without interruption, all

that is inconceivably good and desirable. Here now is the inheritance, which Christ, by his will or testament, gives to his heirs; and he will lead and guide them, while in this world, till he gathers them to this city, that where he now is, they may also be, to receive an eternal lustre from him, as the glorious sun of righteousness; that so in his light they may not only see light, but shine forth, as fixed stars, in the firmament of glory for ever.

II. Christ having bequeathed the richest and best inheritance to his heirs, has voluntarily submitted to death, that by his death, he might give a firm and perpetual ratification to the covenant of grace, which is his testament. In this respect the love of Christ to his church, unspeakably transcends the love of the most affectionate parents, when they act it to the utmost towards their children: parents make their wills because they cannot live always, they must die thro' necessity, and they give a legal sanction and ratification to their wills, which is called the execution of them, by subscribing their names, and affixing their seals. Such was the supereminent love of Christ, as a testator, that he would not live, but chose to die: death was his choice, that he might confirm his testament; and what seal did he set to it? he sealed it by his own precious blood: what manner of love was this? no affection or love among creatures can any more bear a pro-

a proportion to it, than the smallest drop can be said to equal the swelling ocean; how great was the love of Christ? when he made his will, he would not live, but chose to die, and gave it a legal sanction by his own infinitely precious blood; that when believers have not only the promises, but the oath of Christ, which by the author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* are said to be two immutable things, they might also have a third immutable thing, Christ sealing the testament or covenant of grace with his own blood; and that when they under the sense of emptiness, sin, guilt and unworthiness, retire to Christ, as the only refuge of their hope, they may have strong consolation.

II. *Of the heirs in Christ's testament.*

Having shew'd what Christ did as a testator, I shall now shew, who they are that stand heirs in Christ's testament, and to whom by his will he hath confirmed the gift of eternal life. Christ's heirs come under discriminating characters, both in eternity, and in time.

I. They who stand heirs in Christ's testament, come under discriminating characters in eternity. They are such as were eternally predestinated to the adoption of children, Eph. i. 5. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*

will. As election puts us into Christ, in the choice of God, so predestination is the cause and condition of our adoption, and of our being made in time the children of God. They are also such as were preordain'd from eternity, to bear a conformity to Christ in holiness, *Rom. viii. 29. Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to a conformity to the image of his Son.* All they who were chose of God, in Christ, to be the inheritors of glory, were predestinated to a conformity to the image of Christ's holiness. If this be so, when it is the strong and standing desire of our hearts, to be made like to Christ in holiness in time, we may know, for our great comfort, that we were upon the heart of God before all time, and that he predestinated us to bear, first a conformity to Christ in holiness, and then a conformity to him in glory. Our holiness is no cause or condition of our election and predestination, but it is a consequent fruit of the one and of the other. When confident sinners, whose wicked sensual lives bespeak their enmity against God, ought to fear and tremble; doubting believers, who are afraid of sin, who hate it, and who are troubled that they are not more holy, may lift up their heads and rejoice; because in their hatred of sin, and in their unfeigned desires after holiness, they may read God's eternal choice of them in Christ, and his predestinating them to the adoption

doption of children, that they might have a right and title to all the riches and treasures of heaven.

II. They who stand heirs in Christ's testament, and to whom he has, by his will, confirmed the gift of eternal life, in time believe in Jesus Christ; it is for this reason that they are said to be the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ, *Gal. iii. 26. Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* It is the Spirit that first draws us to Christ, for a vital union to him, and when we are vitally united to Christ, by the attraction of the Spirit, then faith, as well as every other grace, is wrought in us, and by faith we receive Christ, and partake of his fulness. Before we are vitally united to Christ, by the Spirit, we can no more, in order of nature, have faith, than we can move and act before we live, or than a man can stand in the relation of a son, before he has a father. The distinction which is between the order of time, and the order of nature, is not imaginary, but real. In order of time, the father and the son are together, because the father does not bear the relation of a father, till the very moment he hath a son: But in the order of nature the father is before the son. When the Spirit unites us vitally to Christ, he works faith in us; but the Spirit first applies Christ to us, and then we receive him by faith; and upon our receiv-

ing him by faith, we become actually the children of God by adoption.

III. *Why Christ, as a testator, died to confirm the covenant of grace.*

I come now to shew, why Christ, as he was a testator, died, that by his death he might confirm the covenant of grace, which is his testament. He did it for three reasons.

I. Christ confirmed the covenant of grace by his death, that he might superadd to his people a new title to heaven. The glory of heaven is the inheritance of Christ's people, and it is made sure to them by the most approved and authentic ways of making things sure. It is made sure to them by gift, *Rom. vi. 23. The gift of God is eternal life.* It is the gift of God, whose gifts are without repentance, *Rom. xi. 29. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* It is made sure by the purchase of Christ's blood: and it is made sure by Christ's testament, which he confirmed by his death. Believers have a title to all the treasures of a glorious eternity, not only by the free gift of God, and the purchase of Christ's blood, but also by Christ's will or testament. All covenant-blessings are legacies left them by their dying Savior: they are given to them freely, without the least desert in them, and they are bequeathed to them as legacies. This puts a most

most endearing sweetness into the blessings which they receive. Affectionate children put a value upon all the gifts of their parents, but especially upon what they leave them at their death. Christ not only manifested his love in dying for his people, but, by his death, bequeathed heaven and glory to them, that they might see and taste more of his love. This also affords them stronger arguments for their faith. As eternal life is Christ's legacy, it comes not barely to believers as a free gift, but also by a law-right, because of Christ's testamentary disposal. When believers have much in them to deserve hell, but nothing to deserve heaven, yet they may expect all heavenly blessings, as due upon Christ's account: When they are most unworthy in themselves, yet because their names are in Christ's testament, they have a title, that stands good in law, to all the blessings of the covenant. Legacies are given at the will of the testator; it is not any merit or worth in them to whom legacies are bequeathed, which gives them a right to them, but the good will of the testator, that bequeaths them.

II. Christ confirmed the covenant of grace by his death, that he might render the title of his people to heaven unalterable, and irrevocable. Testaments made by men, if they be founded in truth, justice and equity, are not to be altered, *Gal. iii. 15. If it be but a man's*

man's testament, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto. Christ's testament is a real deed, that can never in the court of heaven be deny'd, rejected or revoked. He, by the shedding his blood, confirm'd the truth, validity and efficacy of it. He confirmed it, as to its truth; the truth of it is not once to be questioned: Not to believe the promises of the covenant of grace, is a black aggravation of our unbelief, because it is to charge Christ's testament with falsehood, and to go about to make our dying Redeemer a deceiver; this is one thing that makes unbelief to be so great a sin: He has also confirmed it as to its validity; it hath the strongest sanction which the law of God can give it, and therefore it can never be altered, disannulled, or abrogated: He hath likewise confirmed it as to its efficacy; as it gives a believer a title to all spiritual blessings, so it carries its own strength, by way of evidence with it: it is a believer's plea and evidence, to obtain, in the court of heaven, a sentence altogether for him, and on his side.

III. Christ confirmed the covenant of grace by his death, that the heavenly inheritance might not only be made sure to his people, but that they might come to the actual fruition of it. If Christ had not died, his people could not have entered into heaven, because there was a necessity for his death, and for

for his ascension to glory, to open for them a passage into heaven.

It may be here objected, that if the death of Christ, as the testator of the covenant of grace, was necessary to open heaven to believers, for their entrance into it, how then did the old testament saints get to heaven, who died before Christ suffered in the flesh? To this I answer, they entered into heaven, because of Christ's covenant engagement, to die for them, which render'd his death as certain, before his incarnation, as it was when he hung upon the cross. God the Father, in receiving the old testament saints to heaven, trusted Christ, who had stipulated to die for them. For this reason Christ is said to be *a lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8.

All that went to heaven, before Christ came in the flesh, were saved by his death; and when he came into the world, and laid down his life a ransom for many, he entered into heaven, that he might keep the heavenly inheritance for them, and plead the right they have to it, not only by virtue of his purchase, but also by virtue of his testamentary gift. Heaven, by Christ's entrance into it, is made as sure to believers, as if they were now actually in it. For this reason they who are quickened by Christ, and are raised up to newness of life, are said to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6. *He hath*

hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Believers first sit in heaven in Christ, antecedent to their sitting there with him: While they are in this world, and are as heirs under age, they sit in heavenly places in Christ, as he is their federal head, and hath taken possession of heaven for them; but when they are heirs come to age, they shall then sit with Christ in heaven, and shall have the use and full enjoyment of their estate.

With what joy may believers meditate on this truth! When it speaks forth their dignity, it should strongly engage them to duty: they should reason and argue thus, are we already advanced to this privilege, to sit in heavenly places in Christ, which gives us the highest assurance of sitting there with him; shall it not be our care and study, to live a spiritual heavenly life, to act as if we were in heaven, while we are on earth, and to aspire after a nearer and greater assimilation to that perfect holiness and purity which is there?

IV. *The application.*

I shall now make some application in two things.

I. When we have any ground to hope, that we stand heirs in Christ's will, or testament, we must consider the greatness of his love towards us, till we are fill'd with the

admiration of it. It was superabundant grace in Christ, to seal his testament by his blood, that he might confirm the gift of eternal life to us, who were by nature children of wrath, and were, as the apostle expresses it, sold under sin, *Rom. viii. 14. I am carnal, sold under sin.* We are, in our fallen state, sold under sin two ways: *Adam* the father of us all sold us under sin; as by the imputation of his disobedience to us, we were made sinners before God, so by the derivation of his corrupt nature to us, we were born into the world slaves to sin. By our actual transgressions, we also sold our selves under sin, and chose Satan for our governour. The devil kept fast hold of us, till Christ, by conquest, dissolved the contract between him and us, and so delivered us, when we were the captives of the mighty, and the prey of the terrible one, *Isai. xlix. 25. The captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible one shall be delivered.* When we were slaves to sin by our birth, and when we had sold our selves under sin, what love was it in Christ, to seal his testament by his death, that he might thereby confirm to us the gift of eternal life? Shall we not say of this love of Christ, O miraculous, unprecedented love, who would be without thee, and who would not lose millions of worlds, rather than be for ever deprived of thee!

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That we may have our hearts rightly affected with wonder and gratitude, on the consideration of the greatness of Christ's love to us, in shedding his blood, to confirm to us the covenant of grace, which is his testament; let us frequently meditate on the bitter circumstances that attended his death. When by faith we behold the captain of our salvation in his direful sufferings, we cannot but be fill'd with an affectionate admiration of the great love wherewith he loved us. Let us contemplate him in his agony and bloody sweat in the garden, and think of the hell of sorrows he then endured in his spotless soul: let us view him travelling to mount *Calvary*, in the greatness of his strength, and see him there groaning, bleeding, sighing, dying: let us regard him who was the Father's delight, crying out in the most doleful manner, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* let us behold that head torn with thorns, which was worthy to be crown'd with glory and honor, and those arms stretch'd on the accursed tree, which were able to wield the thunder of omnipotence: let our faith descend with him into the silent grave, and there see the prince of life, submitting to the power of death: let us by faith view all this, and it will awaken our gratitude, and all our cheerful powers, and we shall cry out with holy rapture, *O the depth of the mercy, and of the love of Christ,* who

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when he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we thro' his poverty might be rich; and who when he was in the form of God, and was possess'd of a full equality with God, yet on our account veil'd his awful glories, took on him the form of a servant, appear'd as a man, a miserable man, and in our nature endured the cross, and despised the shame of that death, for the joy that was set before him of bringing many sons and daughters to glory!

It is necessary for us, in order to be fill'd with admiration, on the account of the greatness of Christ's love to us, to meditate frequently on his death and sufferings; yet we must not rest in *Golgotha*, but that our faith may grow strong, we must also behold the triumphs of our rising Savior: tho' our faith must follow him to the tomb, yet we must remember he is not now there, but is risen. Christ, as mighty conqueror, has sprung from the bands of death, and destroy'd the power of the grave; he has triumph'd over the thrones, dominions, and principalities of the kingdom of darkness, and has trod the infernal powers under his victorious feet: having accomplish'd his bloody warfare, he ascended on high, with scars of honor in his flesh, and with glory crowning his head: in reward of his sufferings he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, where he now intercedes for us, and as a priest upon his throne,

throne, bestows upon us, in his own time, all those blessings and benefits which he purchased and confirm'd to us by his death. Let our faith ascend where he is gone up, and enter where he is enter'd; and as he shew'd love unspeakable in dying for us, let us rest assured, that he, in his exalted state, will retain his affection for us, and will, when our warfare here below is accomplish'd, bring us to that land of pure delight which is above; that where he is, we may be also: there no uneasy thoughts will ruffle our minds, nor will any grieving complaints employ our tongues, but serenity will possess our souls, and loud hosannah's to the God of our salvation will fill our mouths; there our eyes will behold the king of glory, in all the perfection of his unveil'd beauty, and our souls will enjoy him in all the ravishing sweetness of his love; there we shall be satisfied with the joy that is in the presence of our glorified head, and shall continually be refresh'd and regal'd from those rivers of pleasure, and streams of full salvation, that flow from his right hand for evermore.

II. If Christ seal'd the covenant of grace, which is his testament, by his death, that he might confirm to the heirs of salvation the gift of eternal life, then we ought to improve all the means and institutions which Christ has appointed, to strengthen our faith in the belief of this truth, and especially the ordinance

nance of the Lord's supper, which has a peculiar subserviency for this end. The cup in the Lord's supper is, by a metonymy, called the new testament of Christ's blood, because in it, and by it, the testament of Christ is sealed and ratified anew, *Mat. xxvi. 28. This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.* The sacramental cup is call'd the new testament of Christ's blood, because by it Christ seals afresh his testament, to every believing receiver. It is not naturally and really blood, that we see in the sacramental administration, and wherewith Christ seals his testament; but it is blood sacramentally, symbolically, and significantly: it is a representation of Christ's blood, and as it is a figure of it, it amounts to as much as if it were true natural blood, for the sealing of Christ's testament, to all who by faith look thro' the outward elements, to the blood of Christ. It is as much, when we believe and act faith in the sacramental ordinance, as if Christ stood among us, in his human nature, opened a vein in his body, and with the blood running out of it, should sign and seal the covenant of grace, and deliver it into our hands. This is what Christ does spiritually, to every worthy receiver, and by setting his seal anew to his testament, in his last supper, he makes over himself, and all he has, freely to a believer;

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he says, I give my self to thee, and will be thine entirely, and eternally.

In the sacramental ordinance, Christ seals a bond, with his own blood, as well as with his own hand, to give a believer the freshest, as well as the highest assurance, that he will be his all-sufficient Savior, his satisfying portion, and exceeding great reward. When we can believe this, and realize it to our selves, what flights of heavenly affection, what fresh gales of holy confidence, and what elevations of joy will it work in us? it will wonderfully refresh our spirits, rejoice our souls, and comfort our hearts.

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OF

OF
CHRIST, as He is MEDIATOR
Of the
Covenant of GRACE,
For REDEMPTION and for INTERCESSION.





OF
CHRIST, the MEDIATOR
OF THE
COVENANT of GRACE.

1 TIM. ii. 5.

There is one God, and one Mediator, between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

WE are all, as we are born into the world, not only strangers to God, and separated from him, but we are enemies to him, and act in opposition and contradiction to him; if we remain in a state of separation from God, and of enmity a-
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gainst him, we must be deprived of his favor, and all the good he can give us; and we must for ever feel the utmost of his displeasure, and suffer all the evil of punishment he can inflict upon us: when we fall under a conviction of the truth of this, we shall ask, how we must appear before that God, whom we have offended, from whose eye we cannot be hid, and from whose revenging arm we cannot retreat; how we shall avoid his wrath which we have highly deserved, and regain his friendship which we have forfeited; and how we shall be approved by God, and be at peace with him, when we might for our sins be rejected and condemned by him? When we are brought to ask such questions, the doctrine of a mediator is that only which can give rest to us, in the midst of our anxious, perplexed, troubled thoughts; and it will be more refreshing to our souls, than showers of rain are to the parch'd earth, in a dry scorching season.

The apostle *Paul*, in the beginning of this chapter, exhorts that prayer, which is the chief weapon in the christian armory, be made in public assemblies, for all men in general, and for civil governors in particular, *ver. 1, 2.* Public prayer is to be made for civil governors, that the followers of Christ may not be oppress'd and persecuted by them, but may live quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness, to perform, without restraint, all the

the duties of the first table of the law, which they owe to God, and in all honesty, to discharge the duties of the second table of the law, which are due to men. The apostle urges this duty for three reasons.

1. Because it is good and acceptable to God, when it is done in faith and in sincerity, ver. 3. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.*

2. Because God will have some of all nations, and of all ranks and conditions, to be saved, and consequently to be pray'd for, ver. 4. *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* By all men, must not be understood every man that comes into the world; but some men in every country, and in every station: if all men were here intended, then none would perish, but all would be saved; but this is contrary to the scriptures, and to matter of fact.

The advocates for a conditional universal redemption will say, God is willing that all men should be saved, if they were willing themselves. I answer, This is to argue most fallaciously, because all sinners, in themselves, are so far from being willing to be saved, that they obstinately refuse salvation, and never accept of it, till God makes them willing in the day of his power. Can it be said, that God works this disposition in all men? Besides, this makes the will of God, who is

the great Sovereign of heaven and earth, to depend on the will of revolting and rebellious creatures, and to represent him as willing things which are precarious and uncertain, and which he knows will never come to pass: this is to depose God, and to in-throne the vile creature; it is to throw him down from his uncontrollable sovereignty, and to make him a dependent on the works of his hands; nay, on them who are subjects and vassals to the prince of darkness.

3. Because there is one God to whom we ought to pray, and one Mediator by whom we ought to pray, as in the words of the text; in which, there are two things asserted, *viz.* the unity of God; *there is one God:* and the unity of the mediator of the covenant of grace; *there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* When the apostle says, the man Christ Jesus is the only mediator between God and men, he does not exclude the divine nature of Christ from his mediatorship, as if he were only mediator as he is man; but he emphatically declares the nature, wherein Christ gave himself a ransom for us: the ransom, or price, of our redemption was paid by Christ, as he was God as well as man, and it was his divine nature which gave infinite dignity and merit, to the ransom which he laid down; but his human nature was the nature only in which it was paid.

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The doctrinal proposition which I shall raise from the words, is this;

Jesus Christ is the mediator of the covenant of grace, to stand and act between God and sinners.

In speaking to this doctrine, I shall do three things.

I. I shall shew, what the work and office of Christ is, as he is the mediator of the covenant of grace.

II. I shall give proof of the sufficiency and fitness of Christ, for the work of a mediator.

III. I shall make some application.

I. *Of the office and work of Christ the mediator.*

I shall begin with shewing what the work and office of Christ is, as he is the mediator of the covenant of grace. The work of a mediator is to make peace between two disagreeing parties, and to adjust all matters in difference between them. Christ has done this between God and sinners; when they were not only far asunder, but at variance,

he brought them together, made peace for offenders with their offended God, and maintains friendship between them : he made peace between God and sinners, as he is the mediator of the covenant of grace, for redemption ; and he maintains this peace between God and believers, as he is the mediator of the covenant of grace, for intercession.

I. Christ, as he is the mediator of the covenant of grace, for redemption, made peace between God and sinners : he answered all the demands of the violated law, made a perfect satisfaction to the offended justice of God, for the sins of his people, and fill'd up the distance and gulph which was between God and them. When elect sinners were so far from God, that they could not be farther from him, unless they had been in hell, then Christ made peace for them, and brought them so near to God that they cannot be nearer to him, except they were in heaven, *Eph. ii. 13, 14. Now in Christ Jesus ye who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace.*

II. Christ, as he is the mediator of the covenant of grace, for intercession, maintains peace between God and believers, and conveys to them all the blessings he purchased for them, by his active and passive obedience. As he is a mediator for intercession, he intercedes for them in heaven, in the strength of

of his infinite merits, to preserve the spiritual life he has wrought in them, to perpetuate their peace with God, and to make them more and more capable of a full, immediate, eternal communion with him in glory.

As Christ is a mediator for redemption, he rent asunder the veil between God and us; and as he is a mediator for intercession, he keeps it open, that we may have a free converse with God, and that his graces may flow out, in the greatest abundance, upon us: as he is a mediator for redemption, he obtain'd all good for us; and as he is a mediator for intercession he communicates it to us: as he is a mediator for redemption, he delivered us from the greatest misery, and procured for us a weight of glory; and as he is a mediator for intercession, he makes us mete for the heavenly inheritance, and then brings us to it.

II. *Of Christ's fitness for the work of a mediator, both for redemption and for intercession.*

Having shew'd what Christ's office as a mediator is, I shall now give proof of his sufficiency and fitness for the work of a mediator, as he is a mediator for redemption and for intercession.

I. Christ

I. Christ has a sufficiency and fitness for the work of a mediator, as he is a mediator for redemption, or to make peace between God and sinners. There are three things which are proofs of his sufficiency and fitness to do this.

1. Christ is most nearly allied to God and sinners, between whom he interposed, as a reconciler and peace-maker. He is most nearly allied to God, because he is essentially one with him; he is one in essence with God the Father, when he is personally distinct from him; as he is the eternal Son of God, he has the greatest nearness to him, and can call him Father. He is also most nearly allied to elect sinners, *Eph. v. 30. We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* When he can call God Father, as he is the only begotten Son, he can call sinners brethren, as he is man: as believers are his children by regeneration, so they are his brethren by adoption, *Heb. ii. 11, 12. Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name to my brethren.*

If Christ had been only God, he could have had no alliance to our nature; and if he had been only man, he could have had no alliance to the divine nature; but as he is both God and man, in one and the same person, he is most nearly allied both to God

and to us; as he is most nearly allied to God and us, he can lay his hand **on** both, to bring God and us together, and to make peace between him and us.

2. Christ could satisfy for our sins, when he suffered for them, as he was God and man in one person. If he had been only God, he would have been incapable of suffering for sin; and if he had been only man, he could never have satisfied for it; but as he was both God and man, he was as able **to** satisfy for sin, as he was capable of suffering for it: as he was God in our nature or flesh, he had power to bear our sins, and the weight of punishment deserved by them: he trod the wine-press of God's wrath alone, *Isai. lxiii. 3. I have trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me.* When Christ trod the wine-press of God's wrath alone, he vindicated the law of God, and glorified his justice, by a full, proper, and perfect satisfaction, which he made for sin. As Christ was able to satisfy for sin that it might not lie upon his people, but be removed from them, so he has almighty power **to** preserve and maintain the satisfaction he made, that sin, in its condemning guilt, may never return upon them.

3. Christ had interest with God, when he had power over sinners. He had interest with God, as he was his only begotten, and well beloved Son, and could do and suffer all

all that was necessary, to pacify his anger against sinners, and to make up the breach between him and them. He had at the same time power over sinners: when he had interest with God, to make peace with him for sinners, he hath power over sinners, to draw them to accept of the peace he has made. As he was able to bring repose and rest to the offended justice of God, so he has power to persuade sinners to receive the redemption which he wrought out and purchased, *John xii. 32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to me.* They who belong to Christ's flock, can never get out of the reach of his arm. When men may despair of their conversion, and may know of no way whereby it may be brought about, Christ has many ways to effect it; he can draw to himself all that were given him, by God the Father, when some of them may seem to us to have got to the very gates of hell.

If Christ was most nearly allied to God and sinners; if he was able to satisfy for sin, when he suffered for it, as he was both God and man in one person; if he had interest with God, to make peace with him for sinners, and if he has power over sinners, to persuade and draw them to accept of the peace he has made for them; then he has the greatest sufficiency and fitness for the work of a mediator, as he is a mediator for redemption.

II. Christ

II. Christ has a sufficiency and fitness for the work of a mediator, as he is a mediator for intercession. As Christ is a mediator for intercession, his work is to maintain peace between God and believers, and to apply to them all the blessings which he purchased for them. The sufficiency and fitness of Christ for his work, as he is a mediator for intercession, may be proved by several things.

1. Christ is omniscient, and as he knows all things, he has a perfect comprehensive knowlege of the wants and exigencies of all believers, throughout the whole world. It is as vain as it is sinful, to pray to the saints departed, to be intercessors in the court of heaven for us, because *Abraham*, who in his day was so mighty in prayer with God, is ignorant of us, *Isai. lxiii. 16.* *Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowlege us not.* The saints departed are ignorant of us, and cannot be intercessors for us in heaven; but Christ has a perfect knowlege of our persons and necessities: in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowlege, *Col. ii. 3.* When he has infinite wisdom, to manage all the affairs of our souls, for our greatest advantage, he has infinite knowlege, to know our wants, and to judge what is best for us: as he can hear the many thousands of prayers which believers, up and down the world, offer at once to God in his name; so he knows,

as perfectly and distinctly, what there is in every believer's prayer, which is fit to be answered, as if he had but the prayers of one single believer to hear and consider. It is not the greatest croud or number of suppliants, that put their petitions into his hands, that can make him either mistake, or forget the proper requests of any one of them.

2. Christ, in his intercession, has equal respect to all them who are under his care, in all things which belong to their salvation and comfort. It is a most unsound speech to say, Christ died equally for all, for *Judas* as much as for *Peter*, for *Demas* as much as for *Paul*, for them that perish as much as for them that are saved; but it is a great truth to say, Christ intercedes equally for all them for whom he died. Christ in heaven intercedes equally for them, because all believers are one, in respect of their relation to him; he is one to them in his headship, and they are all one to him in their membership, *Gal. iii. 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* How are all believers one in Christ Jesus? I answer, they are all equally elected in him, united to him, justified by him, and in him they are all equally adopted, and made the heirs of glory: when all believers are one in the aforesaid respects, Christ intercedes for them all, as they are all one in him;

him: he died equally for all who are his, and he intercedes equally for them. The regard which he hath to the weakest believers, is not only the same which he hath to them, who have gone farthest in the acquisitions of grace; but he expresses greater tenderness towards the weak, than he does towards the strong: he has the same equal love for all the children of his family; but they who are of the lowest stature, and who meet with the sharpest trials, feel most of his melting affections. It is not with Christ as it is with some weak and unnatural parents, who inordinately love some of their children, and neglect and despise others. Christ loves all his children equally, and his weak children experience most of his boundless compassions. The well-grown believer must never presume, that he has no need of the intercession of Christ in heaven; and the feeble, faint, discouraged believer must not fear, that he is pass'd over by Christ, and not remembred by him as much as the strong. When we are under the care of Christ, our friends may forget to pray for us, but Christ in heaven never forgets to pray for us.

3. Christ is a mediator for intercession, whom God the Father always hears, *John xi. 32. I know (said Christ) that thou hearest me always.* Christ intercedes, or prays, in heaven, but differently from what he did

here on earth, and his intercessions or prayers in heaven are always answered.

(1.) Christ intercedes or prays in heaven; but differently from what he did here on earth. He pray'd on earth, in his abased, humbled state, and as a sufferer; but he prays in heaven in his exalted state, and as a triumphant conqueror: he pray'd on earth with great cries and groans; but when he prays in heaven, his prayer is not a supplication, but a demand of what is his right, and every way due to him. The intercession, or prayer, of Christ in heaven, is the presenting the merit of his active and passive obedience to God the Father, that the elect may partake of all the benefits of it. When Christ intercedes or prays in heaven, he makes known his will to God the Father, that all the blessings which are his, by way of intercession or purchase, may be applied and communicated to all the members of his mystical body.

(2.) The intercessions or prayers of Christ in heaven, are always answered. They cannot but be answered, for three reasons.

[1.] Christ, as he intercedes in heaven, has the same knowledge and the same will with God the Father; this renders his intercession always prevalent. Our prayers are not answered, because, thro' ignorance and corruption, we ask what God never promised to give;

give ; and would prove a curse, and not a blessing, if he gave it us, *Jam. iv. 3. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.* They did not pray that God might be glorified, and their wants supplied, but that their lusts might be gratified. We often pray, either for things which would be evil to us, if we had them, or for good things, without pure ends. Our prayers are deny'd, because we ask amiss ; but Christ's prayers for us are always answered, because he prays only for what he knows God will give ; and he prays that it may be given us in the fittest season. When he asks nothing but what is willed by God the Father, as well as desired by himself, how can he meet with a denial ?

[2.] The intercessions of Christ in heaven, are the prayers of one who is God as well as man, and therefore they are prayers of infinite merit. The infinite majesty of Christ mediator, puts infinite merit into his prayers : when the prayers of Christ have infinite merit in them, what he asks must be granted him, because it belongs to him in a way of the strictest justice.

[3.] The intercessions of Christ in heaven, are the prayers of him who is the only begotten, and infinitely beloved Son of God. When Christ hath infinite right or justice, to strengthen all his pleas, he meets with infinite love in God the Father, to move him

to grant all his requests. It is for the aforesaid reasons, that all the prayers of Christ in heaven for his people, must be answered.

The intercession of Christ has a prevalence in it equal to the infinite merit of his blood; and the one can no more be rejected than the other. What a privilege then must it be, if we have Christ in heaven, to intercede or pray for us! As his intercession can never be without efficacy, so it reaches as far as all the fruits and effects of his death. As there was not one spiritual blessing, but Christ purchased it for his people, so there is not one blessing, which he purchased for them by his death, but he now intercedes and pleads in heaven, that it may be convey'd to them, and bestow'd upon them. It is in heaven that Christ prays for the application and conveyance to his people, of every blessing which belongs to grace and glory. They only are happy, and truly happy, who have Christ to intercede or pray for them.

4. Christ, as he is a mediator for intercession, is most fit to be trusted. God the Father trusted Christ with the salvation of the souls of all the elect, and he is faithful to answer his trust, *John vi. 39. This is the will of him that sent me, that of all that he has given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* If a God of infinite wisdom trusted Christ with the salvation of all the elect, then there is the greatest

greatest reason that they themselves, when they are brought to the knowlege of him, should trust him. As Christ is such a physician, that no sick soul under his care ever died, for want of a cure, so he is such a mediator for intercession, that no man's cause ever miscarried under his hand. We ought to trust him, because he is one who will never desert our persons, or betray our cause: we may, with the greatest security, commit to him the great concerns of our souls, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, or trusted, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* The knowlege which the apostle had of Christ, was so clear and distinct, that it produc'd in him a faith which rose up to a full persuasion, and carry'd him above all fears, concerning his eternal salvation; he was fully persuaded, that Christ was able, and faithful, to keep his soul, which he had committed to him as a pledge. What the apostle did, all believers ought to do: they ought to deposite their immortal souls in Christ's hands, and to leave the care and keeping of them to him.

5. Christ is a mediator for intercession, who is always at hand, and never far off: he hath entred into heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. He appears now in heaven, as a mediator for intercession; but he is near to all

who call upon him here on earth. Advocates among men are often far to seek, and ill to find, when we have the greatest need of them; but Christ is always near, and never far off from them who call upon him; and as he knows their distresses and necessities better than they themselves, so they can never be so great, but he can give them sufficient relief. Our friends may have a will to assist us, when they have no power to do it; and it rather adds to our grief, than lessens it, to see them desirous to help us, without any ability; but as Christ is a mediator for intercession, who is always within call, so he can do for us exceeding abundantly, not only above all we can ask, but above all we can think, *Eph.* iii. 20. We may soon out-pray the power of all the angels in heaven, and ask what they can never do; but we can never out-pray the power of Christ, as he is our advocate in heaven. Our thoughts are vastly larger than our words; but our thoughts bear no proportion to the power of Christ: the things which do not come within the compass of our thoughts, are not too great for Christ to do for us, because he can do exceeding abundantly not only above what we ask, but above what we think. We have a mediator for intercession, who is always near to us, and when he is always near to us, he is almighty in power, to do far more for us, than can come within the largest circle of our thoughts.

6. Christ

6. Christ is a compassionate, tender-hearted mediator for intercession, *Heb. v. 2. He can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them who are out of the way.* He has pity for them, when they are wandering in the dark shades of their own ignorance, and when they have wandered farthest from the way of life, he can bring them into it. He pray'd for the *Jews* when they crucified him, *Luke xxiii. 34. Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.* This prayer of Christ was answered, in the conversion of every elect person, who was then in that murderous croud. The miraculous success of *Peter's* sermon was the fruit of this prayer of Christ, when three thousand were converted in one day. If Christ pray'd on earth, for them who were acting great enmity against him, will he not now pray in heaven, for them whose souls are drawn out after him? Christ has a feeling, by way of sympathy, of the sufferings of his people, which fills his heart with tender compassions towards them, *Heb. iv. 15. We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* When Christ is touch'd with the feeling of the infirmities of his people, he can neither be unconcern'd about their welfare, nor neglect any thing which pertains to their peace.

7. Christ is a perpetual mediator for intercession, *Heb. vii. 25.* *He is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* The argumentative force which is in the words is this, Christ is able to save all who come to God by him, because the end of his life is to intercede, and the end of his intercession is to save.

(1.) Christ ever lives in heaven to intercede for them who come to God by him. It is a great privilege to have faithful friends, to give us seasonable counsel and advice in difficult matters; to admonish and reprove us, when we are faulty; to exhort us to our duty, and heartily and fervently to pray for us in our adversity: it is a great advantage to have such friends; but when we have them, we are either soon taken from them, or they from us: a short time separates between us and our best friends; but Christ is a friend that never dies, but ever lives to intercede for us.

(2.) Christ intercedes in heaven for his people, that he may save them to the utmost. This is the end of his intercession. The immediate end of his death was to satisfy the justice of God for sin; and the immediate end of his intercession is to save them for whom he died, and to bring them to the highest pitch of glory, which he has prepared for them: he made expiation for their sins upon

upon the cross, and he now sits in heaven as a priest upon his throne, to perfect their happiness: he has treasured up all blessedness for them, and is gone to heaven to bring them to the enjoyment of it, *John* xiv. 23.

I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to my self, that where I am, there ye may be also. When Christ is the redeemer of his people, he is also their harbinger; he went before, to keep heaven for them, and to prepare them for it: he has removed all mountains of opposition out of their way, and they have no enemies to encounter, but such as are disarm'd and conquer'd. The end of Christ's living in heaven, as he is a mediator, is to intercede for his people; and he will never leave off to intercede for them, till he has brought them to that over-flowing and boundless ocean of eternal felicity, which is in the other world.

If Christ, as he is omniscient, hath a perfect knowlege of all the wants and exigencies of believers, throughout the whole world; if he intercedes equally for all who are under his care; if he is always heard of God the Father, when he intercedes for his people; if he is fit to be trusted; if he is near for the help of them who call upon him; if he is a compassionate tender-hearted mediator; and if he will never leave off to intercede for them who come to God by him, till

till he hath perfected their happiness in heaven; then Christ hath a sufficiency and fitness for the work of a mediator, as he is a mediator for intercession.

III. *The application.*

I shall now make some application.

I. If Christ be the only mediator of the covenant of grace, to stand and act between God and sinners; then the practice of the papists is to be condemned, who set up many false and feigned mediators. When they confess that Christ is the only mediator for redemption, but plead that there are other inferior mediators for intercession; they add to their sin, when they would excuse it, because they contradict the words of the apostle in the text. When the apostle says there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, he speaks of Christ as he is the only mediator for intercession, as well as for redemption. This appears to be undeniably true to every one who considers the coherence of the words: when the apostle had exhorted to the duty of praying for all men, he then subjoins, *There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*; it is as if he had said, as there is but one God to whom we must pray, so there is but one mediator, for intercession, in whose name we must pray, and who

can receive our prayers, and offer them up to God.

1. I shall prove that the sin of the papists, in setting up many mediators for intercession, is exceeding great. Whatever the popish sophists allege to extenuate this sin, it is exceeding great, as may be proved by four things.

(1.) It is idolatry : trust or confidence is the highest act of divine adoration : to pray to creatures, to intercede in the court of heaven for us, that we may be heard of God, is to place our confidence in them, which is to give the highest part of worship to them : this is idolatry.

(2.) It is as great a sin to set up many mediators for intercession, as it is to set up a plurality of Gods to worship. The multiplication of mediators is as absurd and blasphemous, as the multiplication of gods, to be the objects of our adoration ; and therefore it is as necessary to salvation, to believe there is but one mediator, as it is to believe there is but one God. When the apostle speaks of the many pretended deities, and mediatory spirits of the heathens, he asserts it to be the catholic belief of all christians, that there is one God, and one mediator, *1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.* *Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or earth, (as there be gods many and lords many) but to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and*

and we in him (or for him;) and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. In the fifth verse, the plurality of the heathen Gods, and mediatory spirits, is stigmatiz'd, *There be that are called gods, whether in heaven or earth (as there be gods many and lords many.)* It is as if he had said, there are many that are falsely called gods, and inferior gods, or mediators, by them whose light is no better than darkness. As the heathens had many false gods, so they had many dæmons, or mediatory spirits, which, as they fancy'd, carry'd their petitions to their false gods, and brought back their answers. In the sixth verse the apostle lays down the catholic faith of all believers, from which none of them must vary: which is, that there is but one mediator, as well as one God: *But to us (who by the sovereign grace of God are delivered from the delusions of a blind idolatrous world,) there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.* As there is one God, who is the fountain, and primary cause of all things, both in the old and in the new creation, so there is but one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made, in the first creation; and by whom the new creation was brought about, and who procured all the blessings belonging to it. There is one God the Father,
who

who is the first spring of all the blessings we receive ; and there is one mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, by and thro' whom, all covenant blessings come to us.

When the papists are forward to charge all who separate from them, with being heretics, we may, with great truth and justice, retort on them the charge of heresy ; because they have departed from the catholic doctrine of all true believers, and have symbolized with the heathens, in constituting many intermediate spirits, for intercession : in doing this they have rendred themselves much more inexcusable than the heathens ; because the light of the scriptures would teach them to know and do the contrary, if they did not either act against it, or keep themselves and others ignorant of it.

(3.) When the papists are far more inexcusable than the heathens, in multiplying mediators for intercession, they also throw themselves upon a level with the *Mahometans*. As the *Mahometans* set a barbarous deceiver above Christ, so the papists set a woman over him, as they countenance the vulgar in making many prayers to the virgin *Mary*, for one they make to Christ, and as they give her a pre-eminence, or commanding power over Christ, in some of their devotional writings, and forms of prayer. When any among them have disapproved such blasphemous extravagancies, and have

endeavoured to antidote the common people against the poison which is in them, they have met with no other reward, than the hatred of the popish clergy, and have felt the smart of their severe revenge.

(4.) Under the pretence of humility they act the worst pride, in casting the greatest disparagement on Christ, *Col. ii. 18.* *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshiping of angels.* Praying to angels was set on foot in the apostles days, by some who followed the *Platonists*: they thought it was presumption to pray to God, without created spirits to intercede for them: as this was their plea, so it is the argument of the papists. It is their humility, as they pretend, not to go to God, without the mediation of saints and angels; this is called a voluntary humility, which hath, for its spring, the vanity of a fleshly mind: it is a humility, that serves as a cloke for the most diabolical pride, and gives men leave to trample upon the sovereign authority of God, who is their supreme lawgiver: it is a humility that reproaches Christ, as if he either wanted some rival favorites in the court of heaven, to give him more credit with God, or some to excite his languishing affections towards his people; or as if he had need of a great number of secretaries, to write down the petitions he must present to God. **What a reproach is this, which the papists cast**

cast upon Christ? fallen man is never more desperately proud, than when he presumes he can perform his devotion in a better way than God hath appointed.

2. I shall give reasons, why we must constantly, in our belief and practice, adhere to Christ, as our only mediator for intercession.

(1.) None were partners with Christ in his sufferings, and none must share with him in his mediatorial office. To rob him of the glory of his intercession, is the same as to strip him of the merit of his death: to deny him to be our only intercessor, is no better than to deny him to be our sole redeemer. Christ only had the right to redeem us; and he only has the right to plead in heaven for us. The angels and saints shed no blood for us, and they have none to plead in heaven on our behalf.

(2.) The high priest under the old testament was typical of Christ, as he is a mediator for intercession, when he entered into the most holy place, with the perfuming incense: how did he enter? it was his office to enter alone, without any with him, *Heb. ix. 7. Into the second went the high priest alone.* If any other had presumed to enter, he would have been a mark for the arrows of God's vengeance. If we come to God by any other intercessor than Christ, we shall meet with the terrible frowns of his powerful anger, instead of the smiles of his redeeming love.

(3.) There

(3.) There was never any appointed, by God the Father, either to be conjunct with Christ in his intercession, or to be a substitute to him. It is in Christ's name only that the Gentiles ought to trust, *Matth. xii. 21.* *In his name shall the Gentiles trust.* As Christ was the truth of all the old testament types, the substance of all *Levitical* shadows, and the center of all scripture prophecies; so he is the only mediator to make peace between God and sinners, and to maintain it. They who reject him as the only mediator for intercession, and set up other mediators with him, in contradiction to the wisdom of God's appointment, must inevitably perish, because it is Christ only who can shelter sinners from the irresistible wrath of God. If we do not cleave to Christ, as he is our only mediator for intercession, we turn our backs on him who can be the only tower of our defence; and we must be crush'd by the thunder of God's avenging justice.

II. If Christ is the only mediator of the covenant of grace, for redemption, to make peace between God and sinners; then this truth may be apply'd to all sinners, who may have a speculative, traditional, hear-say knowlege of Christ, but are yet without a fiducial, experimental knowlege of Christ mediator: they who come justly under this character, may be persuaded to seek after the knowlege of Christ mediator, and faith in him, from the consideration of four things.

1. When sinners are without the knowlege of Christ mediator, and without faith in him, despair must be their portion. When sinners come to be sensible of their condition, and yet are without the knowlege of a mediator, they sink into despair. When *Luther* was without the knowlege of Christ mediator, he had such darkness in his soul, and came under temptations, which were a burden so heavy to him, that he often wish'd he had never been a man: he made use of all the remedies prescribed in popery, to administer comfort to troubled souls; but he could never have any peace, till he came to the knowlege of Christ mediator, and believed in him, and in him only, for a justifying righteousness before God: when he came to the knowlege of Christ mediator, heaven was open'd upon him, and his dark night of despair was turned into the joyful light of a clear morning, without clouds and rain: it is only in the same way that he got comfort, that we must seek it, if we ever expect to find it.

2. When sinners are without the knowlege of a mediator, and without faith in him, they have none to plead with God for them. It was dreadful when God forbid the prophet *Jeremiah* to pray for the *Jews*, Jer. xiv. 11. *Pray not for this people for their good.* It is as if God had said, because I am fully purposed to punish the sins of this ob-

stinate people, therefore, that thy prayers may not be lost, or be in vain, I charge thee to pray no more to me for them. When the prophet was not to pray for their good, all evil was coming upon them. When God forbids his favourites to pray for a people, they are in a helpless condition. If it be a mark of God's displeasure against us, when we are shut out of the prayers of the friends of God, what is it to have Christ silent on our account, and not to speak one word for us? if all the saints on earth, and if all the angels in heaven, should pray for us, it would do us no good, if we had not Christ to intercede for us.

3. When sinners are without the knowledge of Christ mediator, and without faith in him, they will not only have Christ to be silent concerning them, and to say nothing for them; but they must have him to plead against them. Unbelieving sinners will have all the injur'd attributes of God to fight against them, and they will have Christ mediator, whom they have despised, to plead against them. It is to be observed, that the power of asking was conferr'd on Christ mediator, for the destruction of his enemies, as well as the salvation of his friends, *Psal. ii. 8, 9. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt*

shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Christ mediator asked for a power not only to save his people, but to break in pieces all them who rebel against him. A potter's vessel may be broke with a rod of willow, but how soon is it broke with a rod of iron? The strongest of Christ's enemies are but as a potter's vessel, when they stand in the way of his power; how suddenly then will they be broke, when he takes up his iron rod, and in the greatness of his fury strikes them with it!

4. The eternal misery of sinners who live without the knowlege of a mediator, and without faith in him, is unavoidable. When sinners are not in the hands of a mediator, to present them faultless before God, they must, under the guilt of all their sins, fall into the hands of God, as he is a revenging judge: This of all things is most fearful, *Heb. x. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* If we are not found in the hands of a mediator, we must fall into the hands of a wrathful God; therefore if we would not fall into the hands of a wrathful God, and so be made unavoidably, and eternally miserable, we must get a believing experimental knowlege of Christ mediator, that we may live in this world without slavish fear, and die with comfort.

III. If Christ is the only mediator of the covenant of grace, for intercession, as well

as redemption, then this ought to encourage all who believe in Christ, in the great work of frequent and fervent prayer. Believers have two great encouragements, to pray often, and with fervency.

1. Christ, as he is a mediator for intercession, stands ready in heaven, to receive the prayers of believers, and to present them to God. We must rely on the merit of Christ's death, and on the power of his intercession, when we pray to God, because Christ is the altar whereon our prayers must be offered up to God, as well as the incense wherewith our prayers must be perfum'd, *Rev. viii. 3, 4. Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it up, with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar, which was before the throne: and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand.* Here we may note, that Christ offers up to God, all the prayers of the saints here on earth; he is said to stand at the golden altar, with a golden censer in his hand, to offer up the prayers of all saints: it is only in the smoke or perfume of Christ's incense, that the prayers of all saints ascend up to God. It is only in the fulness of his merit, and in the power of his intercession, that our prayers rise up before God, and meet with gracious answers

answers of peace. Not one of our prayers could ever reach heaven, if it were not for the intercession of Christ. As the tears of our repentance must be wash'd in the blood of Christ, so it is only by the sweet incense of his merit, and in the power of his intercession, that our prayers can go up to heaven. It is Christ's intercession only that procures answers to our prayers.

2. There is no good thing but believers may expect it from God, when they come to him in prayer, by Jesus Christ, as their mediator for intercession, *Heb. iv. 14, 16.* *Seeing then we have a high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* There are three things to be observed in the words:

(1.) It is on Christ only, as he is our high priest, that our confidence must be founded, in our approaches to the mercy-seat of God. When we have Christ, as our high priest, to intercede in heaven for us, we may come to the throne of grace, in the full assurance of faith.

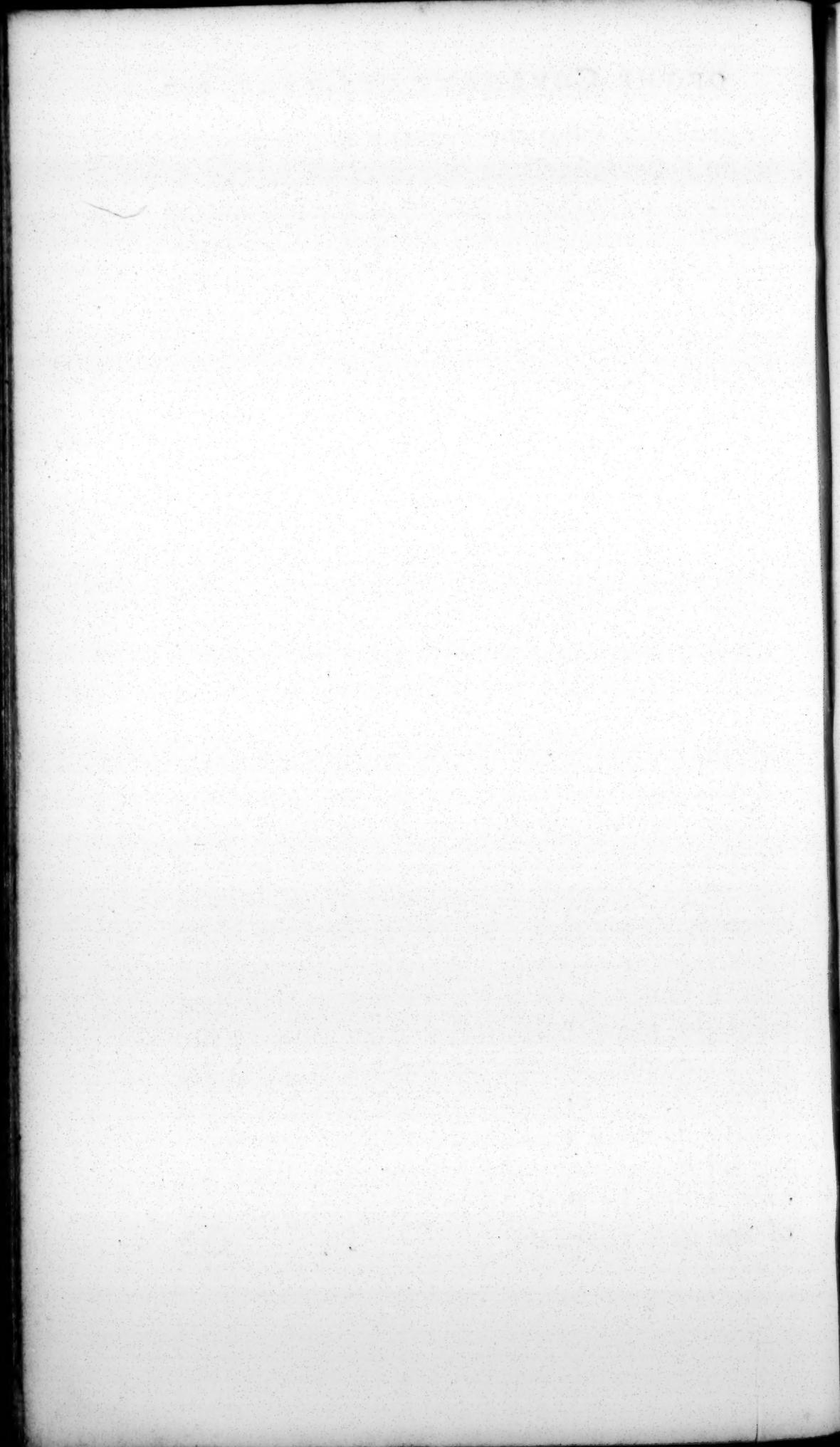
(2.) It is with boldness, or freedom of speech, that we must come to God, upon a throne of grace. It may be asked, what boldness is it wherewith we may come to God? I answer, it is a boldness that consists with a reverential fear of God's infinite majesty, a deep humbling sense of our own un-

worthiness, and which has faith for its principle. A most lowly frame, and the strongest faith go together: it is with the greatest humility, and yet with a believing boldness, that we may come to God upon a throne of grace. We must not, by our unbelieving doubts, either shut up the way which Christ has opened, or make it narrow, when he hath made it broad, for our entering into the presence of God. When we do not come with boldness to the mercy-seat of God, thro' Christ, we do not believe the prevalence of Christ's intercession. Christ is now exalted, at the right hand of God, as our mediator for intercession, and is out of our sight; but we may come to him with as much freedom and boldness, as if he were now conversant with us in his human nature.

(3.) It is thro' Christ, as he is our mediator for intercession, that we may come to God for mercy, and for grace to help in time of need. When we come to God thro' Christ, as our mediator, we shall receive from God every thing which may secure our standing, farther our progress in holiness, satisfy our desires, and make us happy for ever. I shall instance in some things, which we shall receive from God, when we come to him thro' Christ, as our mediator for intercession: *viz.* the daily forgiveness of our sins, by this we are delivered from the fears of condemnation; strength and power against sin, by this

we are freed from the tyranny and dominion of sin ; stedfastness in the way of truth, against all opposition, and in the midst of the greatest discouragements ; support and comfort under all burdens. Christ will lighten the pressures we are under ; he will uphold us when we are ready to fall ; he will rid us of the fears wherewith we are disturbed ; and when we are tossed in a sea of temptations, and are ready to sink, he will be a rock to bear us up. We shall also meet with growth in grace, till we come to the fulness of our spiritual stature ; and with victory over death, a departure out of this world in peace, and a joyful entrance into the heavenly glory.

When we come to God, thro' a mediator, there is no evil we need fear, and there is no good we shall be without. When we have cast our selves upon Christ, as he is a mediator for intercession, as well as for redemption, and can by faith review what we have done, we may speak to our souls, in the words of the royal Psalmist, *Psal. cxvi. 7. Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.* God deals bountifully with a believer, in this life ; but he will deal infinitely more bountifully with him in the life to come : all the joy which he hath, at several times, experienc'd and tasted, in this world, is only as a drop, to that overflowing fulness of joy whereof he shall drink for ever, when he shall go to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.



OF THE
S T A B I L I T Y
OF THE
Covenant of G R A C E,

And the ample Provision made therein,
for the Salvation of Sinners.





OF THE
S T A B I L I T Y
OF THE
COVENANT of GRACE.



2 SAM. xxiii. 5.

Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, though he make it not to grow.



E were, in the first *Adam*, created in a state of perfect holiness, and of perfect amity with God, who is the happiness and center of our souls; but by sin we were divided from that God who made us, and who is the fountain of our life, and the spring

spring of all our comfort. As long as we are estranged from God, we are not more miserable in our state, than we are unsettled in our frame: we are tossed as with a tempest, and are driven hither and thither, by every furious lust, as with a whirlwind; and we can have nothing but distraction, disturbance, and trouble in our spirits, because we have departed from him who is the only rest of our souls: when we labour in the service of sin, and flutter about in the world, we multiply our vexations and disquietments, and make continual additions to our sorrow and torment; but when we return to God, thto' Christ, and build our faith on the covenant of grace, our tranquility begins, all our shaking earthquakes are changed into a quiet repose; and instead of overwhelming sorrows, we partake, and taste of Christ's joy, which is joy unspeakable here, and will be fulness of joy for ever hereafter.

I have spoke of the covenant of grace, as it was made with Christ from eternity, and with all the elect in him: I have shew'd what distinct relations Christ took upon him, in the covenant of grace, and how he did the work of them in time, even of a surety, of a testator, and of a mediator, both for redemption, and intercession: I shall from this scripture speak of the firmness and stability of the covenant of grace.

The

The words of *David*, from the first to the seventh verse of this chapter, are said to be his last words, because they were the last words he spoke as a prophet, as one divinely inspired, and under the conduct of a spirit of infallibility. It is more than probable, that he spoke them, when he had finish'd his solemn charge which he gave his son *Solomon*, who was to succeed him in his kingdom. When *David* had done with this world, and was come near to the time of his departure out of it, he profess'd his faith in God's promises, and express'd his affectionate admiration of that everlasting, infinite, undeserved love, which God had richly displayed towards him, in the covenant of grace.

There are two things in the words :

I. *David* takes notice of the state of his family, which had in it a mixture of light and darkness. *David* had not more comfort in some of his children, than he had heart-breaking sorrows and troubles, because of the aggravated sins, and the untimely deaths of others of his children: *Although my house* (said he) *be not so with God, although he make it not to grow.* The family of this good man was far from being, in all the branches of it, as he desired it to be: it was not like a morning without clouds, or as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain. Some of his children proved monsters for impiety, and were

cut off for their sins in the flower of their age, and in their full strength. *Amnon*'s desires were first inordinately carried out after his sister *Tamar*; and then from impure affections, he proceeded to impure actions, in deflowering his sister. After this *Absalom* made reprisal upon *Amnon*, for the rape committed upon his sister, and took care to have him murdered when he was drunk: *Absalom* fled for this bloody fact, lived for some time in a state of exile, and when he was brought back, and favorably received by his father, he contriv'd to depose his father from his kingly authority, rose up in rebellion against him, drove him from *Jerusalem*, pursued him in his flight, fought his army, and was cut off by *Joab*, in the career of his unnatural wickedness.

It is not to be conceived by us, what sorrow all this brought to *David*: if we add to all this, the biting reflections which he must make upon his own sin, in the business of *Uriah*, which provoked God to suffer his children, as a most just rebuke to him, to act the aforesaid tragedies. How must it pierce *David's* soul, to think his sin was a special reason, why God left some of his children to follow the counsels of their own wicked hearts, and thereby to bring death upon themselves, in such a way and manner, as left him no evidence of their repentance, and deprived him of all hope of their salvation?

vation? What a depth of sorrow must *David* have?

II. When *David* had sorrows and troubles, in their greatness and variety, and was under the most shocking disappointments, upon the account of his family, he quieted and comforted himself, with the believing thoughts of his covenant-relation to God. *He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire.* The covenant of which *David* speaks, was not the covenant of works made with *Adam*, because that was soon broke, and since the breach of it, there is no possibility for sinners to be saved by it: the violated covenant of works gives us only visions of deserved woe and misery, because it threatens damnation to all guilty sinners.

Nor did *David* mean the peculiar covenant, which God made with his house, concerning the kingdom of *Israel*; because that was only of a temporary duration. It was of a far better, and more excellent covenant, that the royal prophet spoke; even of the covenant of grace, made with *David* in Christ. This covenant, as it secured his personal salvation, was a light to him in all the dark providences which his family was under; it was a spring of comfort to him in the floods of his sorrow; and it made the

very

very thoughts of his approaching dissolution, refreshing and comfortable to him.

There are two things said of the covenant of grace in the words of the text :

1. It is said to be an everlasting covenant. It hath a temporary publication, or it is revealed to us in time ; but it was from eternity ; it was made with Christ from everlasting. *David* does not say, God purposed to make a covenant with me ; but he says, *He hath made with me an everlasting covenant*. When it is called an everlasting covenant, we must not presume to put such a diminutive sense upon it, as if it signified no more, than God's purpose to make a covenant. The covenant of grace was a complete, formal, express covenant, as it was made from eternity, by God the Father, with Christ, and with all the elect in him.

2. The covenant of grace is ordered in all things. When the Father and the Son consulted about the way of our redemption, they, with the greatest wisdom, pitch'd upon the most proper means to effect it. The covenant of grace is said to be ordered, not barely in some, but in all things, because all the several methods and ways to bring about our salvation, thro' Christ, are most wisely contrived in the covenant of grace, to answer all the purposes and designs of God. If all the elect angels had employed all their know-

knowlege and skill ten thousand years, to have found out a way for the salvation of sinners, wherein the infinite wisdom of God, in all its glory, might have shined forth, they could never have found out a way fit to be compared to that which is in the covenant of grace. Salvation could never have been had in a better way, and in a more exact order, than it is to be had in the covenant of grace.

3. The covenant of grace is sure. When the Father and the Son pitched upon the most proper means, for our salvation, they made the end sure. When the covenant of grace is ordered in all things, with respect to the means of our salvation, it is sure, as to the end, which is our salvation. The covenant of grace is so firmly settled, that it can never be overturned.

4. *David* call'd the covenant all his salvation, because all his happiness was comprehended in it.

5. He said it was all his desire, because all his comfort, delight, and satisfaction came from it. The covenant of grace ought to be all our desire, because it is not possible for us to desire greater, or better things, than are in it: there is all the blessedness in it, we can desire, or for ever enjoy.

The doctrinal proposition which I shall raise from the words, is this:

The covenant of grace hath the greatest stability in it, and there is the best provision made in it for our salvation.

In speaking to this truth, I shall do three things.

I. I shall prove, that the covenant of grace hath the greatest stability in it.

II. I shall shew, how the best provision is made in the covenant of grace for our salvation.

III. I shall make some application.

I. *The covenant of grace proved to be most sure and stable.*

I shall begin with endeavoring to prove, that the covenant of grace hath the greatest stability in it. God has established the covenant of grace, *Ezek. xvi. 60. I will establish to thee an everlasting covenant.* It is not only an everlasting covenant, but it is fixed and established, as it is so. God is said to command it, *Psal. cxi. 9. He hath commanded his covenant for ever.* He hath put the signature of his royal authority upon it, and hath commanded it to abide, endure, and stand fast for ever. There are three things,

things, which prove the greatest stability to be in the covenant of grace :

I. The covenant of grace hath the greatest stability in it, as it is the product and fruit of God's counsel. God is as invariable in his counsel, and in his gracious disposition, as he is immutable in himself ; there can be no more a change of his counsel, than there can be a change of his nature, *Psal. xxxiii. 11.* *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.* Whatever God thought from eternity, shall be done in time ; and because he will accomplish what he hath thought to do, his counsel must stand. All the counsels of men, which are against God, shall perish, and shall be turned upon their own heads, and shall bring about their own ruin ; but the counsel of God must stand, because it is immutable, as it is the fruit of his infinite and eternal wisdom. If the counsel of God must stand, then the covenant of grace, which is the result of his deepest counsels, must be most stable. There are three things, which are expressive of its great stability :

1. It has a perpetual refreshing verdure in it. It is for this reason represented by a rainbow, of the colour of an emerald, *Rev. iv. 3.* *He that sat upon the throne, was to look on like a jasper, and a sardine stone : and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.* When

other rainbows are of several colours, it is to be observ'd, and remark'd, that the rainbow which encircles the throne of Christ mediator, is of the colour of an emerald, which is all green, without any mixture, and is the best green. This signifies, that the covenant of grace is always springing up, with something which is most refreshing and comfortable, to them who look to it: the refreshing verdure of it comes under no autumnal decays, and under no withering blasts of a rigorous winter: it is always green, and most pleasant to the eye of them who take a view of it, in the light of faith.

2. The covenant of grace will stand fast and sure, when the firmest and strongest parts of the lower creation shall be disjointed, thrown down, and shall shrink into nothing, *Isai. liv. 10. The mountains shall depart, and the high hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* The great mountains shall be torn up by the roots, and shall start out of their places with a hideous noise; the rocks shall reel, and the high hills shall totter and fall, but the covenant of grace, which secures our peace with God, shall never be removed.

3. The covenant of grace is more sure than the constant and certain return of the day and night, *Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21. If you can*

break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant; viz. with Christ, who is our spiritual David. What can all the mighty men in this world do, to hinder the night from spreading a black veil over the face of the earth? What can they do, to stop the sun from rising in the morning, and casting forth his enlivening beams of light? This is not so much above the strength of any creatures, as it is above the skill and power of men and devils, to do any thing to alter and destroy, to shake and overturn the covenant of grace. That which is most stable and certain in heaven and earth, is given as a pledge for the security of the covenant of grace. Who doubts the outgoings of the morning, and the return of the evening; or the alternate course of day and night? As we are assured, that day and night will succeed one another, as long as this world endures, so we may be as much assured, that the covenant of grace will continue sure and stable to eternity.

II. The covenant of grace has the greatest stability in it, because God has confirm'd it by his oath. The covenant of grace is the immutable counsel of God's infinite wisdom and love, and he has ratified it by his oath. When God confirmed the covenant of grace by his oath, he swore by two things:

1. He swore by himself, or by his life, *Heb. vi. 13, 14, 17, 18.* *When God made a promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely, blessing I will bless thee.* Wherein God willing, more abundantly, to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Every promise of the covenant of grace is immutable; and when the oath of God is added to his promise, then we have two immutable things, whereon to build our faith, and to bring us strong consolation. We are chargeable with unreasonable distrust, when we do not believe the promise of God; but our unbelief is much greater, when we do not believe the promise of God, after he has sworn to make it good: God has sworn by his life, and said, that as surely as he lives in and of himself, he will fulfil every promise of his covenant.

2. God swore by his holiness, *Psal. lxxxix. 35.* *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie to David.* Once (faith God) have I sworn: once for all, and once unchangably, have I sworn by my holiness. When God confirmed the covenant of grace by an oath, he then swore, not only by his life, but by his holiness, which is the beauty

and lustre of all his attributes and perfections, that his covenant should never be made void. The salvation of Christ's seed is a thing which had so much of the heart of God in it, that when he settled and secured it, by the strongest bond of an oath, he swore by the attribute of his holiness, which is inseparable, and absolutely necessary to his divine nature: this shews that Christ can no more lose his seed, than God can lose his nature; and that the covenant of grace can no more be made null, than God can cease to be holy. It is one of the titles which God assumes to himself, to be a God keeping covenant, *Dan.* ix. 4. When God confirmed the covenant of grace by his oath, he swore by his life, and by his holiness, that he would observe and keep it. For this reason, God will no more break his covenant, than he can be strip'd of his holiness, which is the glory of his nature.

III. The covenant of grace hath the greatest stability in it, because it is above, beyond, and out of the reach of, all things which render other covenants uncertain, as it is a covenant made by God with Christ. All agreements, treaties, confederacies, and covenants made by men, are uncertain, slippery, full of deceit, soon fail, and fall to the ground, for one or more of these reasons: When men make covenants, they are often impotent, and so are without power to do what they may really purpose and intend; they

may be forced to break their engagements; not thro' wilfulness, but because of weakness. Men have not knowlege to foresee all the contingent difficulties which may arise, and may utterly disable them to fulfil what they have stipulated: they want wisdom, to pitch upon fit expedients and instruments for action, and so miscarry in all the enterprizes which they undertake, to answer their engagements: they are deceitful, and treacherous, and will not do what they have promised. Covenants among men are commonly founded in deceit, but too seldom in truth: when they enter into mutual engagements with one another, they seek to deceive, supplant, undermine, and over-reach one another; and as their covenants are only for selfish ends, so they break them when their lusts are cross'd, and their secular interests are not serv'd. When men lay themselves under covenant-engagements, to do what is just and right, and yet will not do it, when God gives them power to do it, their sin is exceeding heinous; and the greater the numbers of them are, who are deceived and betray'd by them, the more aggravated is their sin, and they usually are made fearful spectacles of God's terrible, avenging justice in this world: history is full of such instances and examples. All covenants among men are uncertain, and the breach of them is to be imputed either to impotence, or ignorance, or folly, or

or treachery. Mens covenants are violated, because the covenanters are either impotent, or ignorant, or foolish, or perfidious; but it would be the height of atheism and blasphemy, to suppose any of the things, which are the causes of the breach of mens covenants, to be in God, or Christ, between whom the covenant of grace was made. The covenant of grace was made between the strength of *Israel*, and Christ who is almighty in power, to perform what he promised, between the true God, and Christ, who is truth it self; between the faithful God, and Christ, who is the faithful witness.

1. There cannot be in God the Father any of the things, which are the causes of the breaking of mens covenants. In God there can be no weakness, because he is almighty in power, and can do whatsoever he will; he never faints, and he is never weary: in him there can be no mistake, thro' incognitancy and unskilfulness, because his understanding is infinite; and he does all by the direction of the most perfect wisdom: in him there can be no inconstancy, for he is without variableness or shadow of turning: in him there can be no unrighteousness, or unfaithfulness, because his nature is holiness it self; and he will as soon deny himself, as contradict his word, or go back from his promise.

If

If God the Father is almighty in his power, to perform what he hath promised, and if he cannot be resisted, when he hath a will to work; if he does all according to the dictates of his infinite wisdom, and can never over-shoot himself in his purposes and designs; if he is always of the same mind, and changes not; if no unrighteousness or unfaithfulness can be found with him; if he can no more deceive them who trust in him, than he can be deceived himself; then it is not possible there should be any thing on the side of God the Father, either as a near or remote cause of the breach of the covenant of grace.

2. There cannot be in Christ any of the things which are the causes of the breach of mens covenants. Christ is not only as far above all weakness, ignorance, folly, and unfaithfulness, as God the Father is, but he hath already done every thing to render the covenant of grace most sure and stable. God the Father promised eternal life, in the covenant of grace, to the elect, upon the account of Christ's active and passive obedience, as the surety of the covenant: Christ performed all that God required of him, in his obedience to the precept and penalty of the law; he could say upon the cross, *It is finished*; because he had no more to do or to suffer, to answer his engagements, as he was the surety of the covenant.

If

If the covenant of grace is the fruit of God's immutable counsel; if God hath confirm'd it by his oath; if it is above, beyond, and out of the reach of, all things which render mens covenants uncertain, as it is a covenant made by God with Christ, then there is the greatest stability in the covenant of grace.

II. *Of the ample provision made in the covenant of grace for the salvation of believers.*

Having proved the covenant of grace to be most completely firm and stable; I shall now proceed to shew how the best provision is made in the covenant of grace for our salvation. This may be seen in two things:

I. The best provision is made in the covenant of grace, for our salvation, because the promises of it are unconditional and absolute. The covenant of grace hath no conditions, but what Christ perform'd for the elect. Christ engaged, in the covenant of grace, that all the elect (if they came to the state of the adult) should believe, repent, be humble, holy, and glorify God by their obedience; and in time Christ works grace in them to do all this; but their faith, repentance, and other graces, which are wrought in them, and acted by them, are no conditions of the covenant. The inherent graces of believers are some of the blessings God has promised in

in the covenant; but they are no causes or conditions, upon which other blessings are given. When the covenant of grace is without all conditions, on the part of the elect, with whom the covenant was made in Christ, as their head and surety, the promises of the covenant of grace are unconditional and absolute, with respect to the elect, and every thing which belongs to their salvation.

1. I shall give reasons, why the promises of the covenant of grace are unconditional and absolute. The reasons are four:

(1.) If any conditions were to be performed, and fulfilled by us, before we could receive the blessings promised in the covenant of grace, then the merit of Christ would be made void, and rendered useless; because it would only be the remote, mediate cause of our salvation, but our performance of certain conditions, would be the immediate cause of it. If any duties done by us (tho' performed in the strength of Christ) were the conditions, or immediate causes of eternal life, then the duties performed by us, would take the glory of our salvation from the infinite merit of Christ.

(2.) Christ is a gift too great to be given to sinners, on any other condition than that of free grace, and all the promised blessings of the covenant are too great, to be given upon any other condition, than the obedience of Christ's life and death. The free grace

grace of God is the only condition upon which Christ is given, and Christ performs all the conditions, upon which the blessings promised in the covenant of grace are given to us.

(3.) If the promises of the covenant of grace were not unconditional and absolute, they could give no ease and relief to our souls, when we are troubled for sin. It is the absolute freeness of the promises of the covenant of grace, that can give rest to our souls, when we are tossed as with a tempest, and are cast down under the fears of a deserved vengeance: it is only in the grace of God, as it is freely promised, thro' Jesus Christ, that our troubled souls can find rest: the reason why our troubled souls can only find rest in the grace of God, freely promised thro' Jesus Christ, is this, a conditional promise which sends us to our own works, promises life to us, no otherwise than if it were in our own power. When a man is troubled for sin, a conditional promise can give him no relief, but leaves him under despair, because he is so sensible of his universal impotence, that he looks upon what must come to him upon the performance of a condition, as altogether uncertain, and he can have no hope or expectations of it. If any thing were required of fallen man, in the covenant of grace, as a condition to be done by him, before he could receive the grace

grace promised, his salvation would be impossible, and the covenant would be for his condemnation, but not for his salvation.

When we consider, how no ease or relief can come to our troubled souls, from a conditional promise, we have ground to fear, that they who with great confidence plead, that the promises of the covenant of grace are conditional, neither know what it is to feel the burden of sin, nor what it is to seek repose for their troubled souls in Christ Jesus: if they never knew what it was to be weary, and heavy laden, under the burden of sin, and to come to Christ for rest, they have no skill or fitness to direct souls in distress, and what they say about the promises of the covenant of grace, is no more to be regarded, than what they who were born blind affirm or deny, concerning the properties of light, and the difference of colours.

(4.) God has promised salvation, or eternal life to sinners, as a free gift thro' Jesus Christ. We cannot apprehend the comfort of the promises of the covenant of grace, without faith; but faith is the fruit and effect of the promises of the covenant, and not the condition of them. Faith and repentance are graces promised in the covenant, but not conditions of it: to say they are conditions of the covenant of grace, is as remote from truth, as it is to say, the branch of a tree is the cause of the root, and not the root the cause of the branch.

Our

Our title to eternal life lies in the free gift of God, and in the merit of Jesus Christ, *Rom. vi. 23. The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ.* When Solomon built the temple, he set up two pillars, which he called *Jachin* and *Boaz*, *1 Kings vii. 21.* *Jachin* signifies, he will establish; and *Boaz* signifies strength. All believers, or temple-worshippers, have two pillars to lean upon, in the hope they have of eternal life, even the free grace of God, and the infinite merit of Jesus Christ: of these two pillars we may say, they are so established, and they are so strong, that when we rest our souls upon them, we shall be comforted, but we shall never be ashamed or confounded.

2. I shall shew, how the promises of the covenant of grace, as they are unconditional and absolute, are every way for the encouragement of sinners, and for the comfort of believers.

(1.) The promises of the covenant of grace, as they are unconditional and absolute, are every way for the encouragement of sinners, to come to God thro' Jesus Christ, for the gift of all grace.

[1.] They must not fear to come to Christ, when they are most unworthy, because it is not a fulness of self-worth, or a personal qualifying meetness, that they must bring to Christ, but a sense of their emptiness, unworthiness and misery. The strongest saints

can-

cannot profit Christ, but the greatest sinners must not stand off from him because they are unprofitable: when they can do nothing for God, this is no bar to Christ's doing all for them.

[2.] When sinners have nothing, they must come to Christ to receive all from him. The poorer they are, the fitter they are to come to Christ, who gives all for nothing. It is not humility, but pride, for sinners to stand off from Christ, because of their poverty. The poorer they come to Christ, the richer shall they return from him, *Luke i. 53. He fills the hungry with good things, and he sends the rich empty away.*

(2.) The promises of the covenant of grace, as they are unconditional and absolute, are every way for the comfort of believers, who have come to God, thro' Jesus Christ. The unconditional and absolute promises of the covenant of grace, are a substantial ground of comfort to believers, when they are cast down in their spirits, because they are not only weak, and can do nothing to procure the best good for themselves, but have provoked God by their new sins. That which may comfort dejected believers, is this, all the blessings of the covenant of grace are given, and that freely, *1 Cor. ii. 12. We have received the Spirit, which is of God, that we may know the things, that are freely given*

given to us of God. There is great darkness and confusion in many, who will acknowledge, that the blessings which God has promised, are given; but when they grant that they are given, they contend that they are given in the method of the old *Adam's* covenant: they plead, that there must be certain previous qualifications wrought in them, and several conditions performed by them, to whom they are given. This is to draw a veil over the glory of God's grace, and to destroy the comfort of believers. When the Spirit of God shines into our souls, we see that all the blessings of the covenant are given us, not only without any regard to a personal worthiness in us, but when we are most unworthy of the least good, and deserve the greatest of all evils. It is by the knowlege of this, that believers come to have a living spring of abundant consolation.

II. The best provision is made in the covenant of grace, for our salvation, because all that belongs to our salvation, or eternal happiness, is promised, and laid up for us, in the covenant of grace. There are three things which sufficiently and undeniably prove the truth of this.

1. The forgiveness of sins is promised in the covenant of grace. The forgiveness of sins, which is promised in the covenant of grace, is most free; and it is universal, or of all sin. When God forgives sin, he abundantly

dantly pardons, or *he multiplies to pardon*, Isai. lv. 7. God multiplies to pardon, till his forgiving mercy rises higher than all our sins. God's forgiving mercy triumphs over the heaps and mountains of our transgressions, *Jer. xxxiii. 8. I will cleanse them from all the iniquity whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.* The forgiving mercy of God is infinite; and as it is infinite, it as much exceeds our greatest sins, as his almighty power surmounts our lowest thoughts.

When we come under a conviction of the greatness of our sins; when we have the most discouraging and damping thoughts, because of our own unworthiness; when we feel the oppressing weight of our guilt, and are cast down with the fears of a deserved condemnation; we must consider, that there is mercy in the covenant of grace, which abounds and superabounds, for the remission of all our sins.

2. The gift of the Spirit is promised in the covenant of grace, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh,*

and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Not only the forgiveness of sins, but all that belongs to regenerating, and sanctifying grace, from first to last, is here promised absolutely. A distinction is to be made, between a new spirit, which is promised in the twenty sixth verse, and that which God calls *my Spirit*, in the twenty seventh verse: a new spirit, is the principle of the life of grace, which is created in us, when we are born again; but the Spirit, which God calls *my Spirit*, is the third person of the Trinity, who enters into all the souls of elect persons, when they are turned to God, and have his image restored in them. The Spirit does not stay till they are prepared to receive him, for if he did, they would never get from under the power of a spiritual death; but he comes preventingly, to work all grace in them.

The gift of the Spirit is absolutely promised, in the covenant of grace; and by this promise of the Spirit, the best provision is made for the salvation of sinners.

(1.) The Spirit unites sinners vitally to Christ. The Spirit is the bond of a perpetual, inseparable union, between Christ and his people. As no opposition can hinder the Spirit from drawing sinners to Christ, so when they are vitally united to him, no

created power can separate them from him. The union between God and innocent *Adam* was soon broke; but the union between Christ and the weakest believer can never be destroy'd. If any ask the reason of this difference, it is this; in the covenant of works, man laid hold upon God; but in the covenant of grace, Christ, by his Spirit, lays hold upon sinners. *Adam* had a perfection of created grace, and was without inherent corruption, and yet his union to God was soon dissolved, because it was to be maintain'd by his performing the conditions of the covenant of works: *Adam* was to take hold of God, by his own strength, and he let go his hold; but the union between Christ and believers is perpetual and inseparable, tho' the graces of believers be imperfect; because Christ takes hold of them by his Spirit, and never lets go his hold of them. The Spirit abides and dwells in believers for ever, to preserve their union to Christ firm and inviolable, *John* xiv. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* Christ, who came to seek and to save them that were lost, will never lose them that he hath found out, and drawn to himself by his Spirit.

(2.) The Spirit gives life to sinners, when they are dead in sin, and plants in them a principle of grace, which is immortal. The Spirit

Spirit plows up the fallow ground of their hearts, and, by the word, sows the incorruptible seed of grace in them, 1 Pet. i. 23. *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God.* Temporary professors may have edifying gifts, but never any thing of renewing grace.

(3.) The Spirit maintains and strengthens the grace he hath wrought in believers: he waters the seed which he has sown in them, that it may spring up, and bring forth fruit. It is to be noted, that *Saul* and *Jehu* were anointed with oil, out of a viol, or box, 1 Sam. x. 1. 2 Kings ix. 1, 2, 3, 6. *David* and *Solomon* were anointed with oil out of a horn, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 13. 1 Kings i. 34, 39. A vial is soon broke; but a horn, which is the excellence of a beast, notes power and strength. The graces of the Spirit, which are conveyed to believers, in the power and strength of Christ, never fail; they are not like the vial, which is soon broke, and then the oil in it is dried up. When the Spirit regenerates and sanctifies sinners, he is ever after a Spirit of power to work in them, 2 Tim. i. 7. The Spirit brings the hearts of all whom he quickens, under a mighty powerful impression, which is never worn off. The Spirit helps believers to keep the grace he hath wrought in them, 2 Tim. i. 14. *That good thing which was committed to thee, keep by the Holy Ghost.* This was spoke of

the gift, whereby *Timothy* was fitted for the work of an evangelist: if a ministerial gift cannot be kept, without the Holy Ghost, much less any grace. We do not more stand in need of grace, to serve God, than we stand in need of the Spirit to keep it in us. Inherent grace can be kept no other way, than by the Spirit, who first infused it into us, and by him it is so kept, that it cannot be lost. Believers have nothing, but what they have received; in this lies the foundation of all true humility: they have so received grace, that they shall never lose it; on this depends all their comfort, in their sorrowful pilgrimage.

(4.) The Spirit preserves believers from apostacy, and secures their progress in holiness.

[1.] The Spirit preserves believers from apostacy. It is promised in the covenant of grace, that when God turns not away from doing believers good, they shall never depart from him, *Jer. xxxii. 40.* *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* When God will never turn away from doing his people good, he plants his fear in their hearts, that they may never utterly depart from believing in him, relying upon him, and doing him service. As the Spirit never left the man

Christ

Christ Jesus; as he was always guided by the unerring dictates of truth it self, and was kept absolutely free from the least wandring; so all his seed shall as certainly be saved, from a final and total apostacy, because the one, as well as the other, is promised in the covenant of grace, *Isai. lix. 21.* *This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* It is as if God had said, As sure as the Spirit of holiness shall not depart from Christ, and as sure as the Spirit of truth shall not depart out of his mouth, so sure it is, that the Spirit of grace, and the word of truth shall not be taken from his members, who are his spiritual seed.

[2.] The Spirit secures the progress of believers in holiness. As the Spirit makes them really holy, when he works in them, as a Spirit of regeneration, so he makes them gradually more and more holy, till he hath brought them to a perfection of holiness: it is by the removal of the heart of stone, that he breaks them off from all sin; and it is by the giving them a heart of flesh, that he inclines them to all good; and when he hath implanted in them all the principles of grace, he strengthens them to act according to the

principles, he hath implanted in them, always and to the end. We may observe how the promise of the covenant runs, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* The covenant seed of Christ cannot live in the breach of God's laws, but they must walk in his statutes. They who live in secret or open sins, and yet boast of their being justified, and that all the blessings of the covenant of grace belong to them, are miserable self-deceivers, because they set one promise and one blessing of the covenant, against another. The pardon of sin is not more absolutely promised in the covenant of grace, than God hath promised, in the same covenant, to put his Spirit within believers, and thereby to cause them to walk in his statutes. The covenant of grace, when it is absolute in its promises, is so far from opening a door for licentiousness, that it infallibly secures the personal holiness of all God's covenant children, and their perseverance in it to the last moment of their lives.

3. God has engaged to be the God of his people, and to make them happy for ever. He hath espoused, and betrothed them to himself, in Christ, *Hos. ii. 19, 20. I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee to me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will*

will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. I will betroth thee, is thrice here repeated, to give the highest assurance to the faith of believers, of the truth and reality of their marriage-union to God, thro' Jesus Christ. It is as if God had said, You have been strangers and enemies to me, but I will bring you into a marriage-union with my self, thro' Jesus Christ. I that made you, will marry you; and this shall give you a power to know me to be your head and husband. God federally betroths his people to himself, thro' Jesus, and by their being betroth'd to him, two things follow, which perfect their happiness.

(1.) They who are betrothed to God, thro' Jesus Christ, are brought into so near a relation to him, that they are nearer to God, than *Adam* was in paradise, or the angels in heaven. *Adam* by creation was near to God; but his nearness to God was far from amounting to the nearness of a marriage-union. The angels in heaven, who behold the face of God, in the light of glory, are near to him; but it is never said, that God betrothed them to himself, or that they are the spouse of Jesus Christ; Christ is their confirming head, but he is not their husband.

(2.) They who are betrothed to God, thro' Jesus Christ, communicate with God in his blessedness. When God marries them, he makes over himself entirely and eternally to them.

them. God hath many ways of communicating himself to his creatures ; but all the various ways which he hath of communicating himself to his creatures, are as nothing, if compared to the way of his communicating himself to believers in Christ. God one way or other makes large communications to all the creatures in the visible heavens and earth, and yet what he communicates to them, is little or nothing to what he communicates to one single believer, in Jesus Christ ; because he makes over himself to every individual believer, as he engages to be his God, *Jer. xxx. 33. I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* There are two things here to be observed.

[1.] The cause, or condition, of our being the people of God, is God's being our God : he becomes our God in covenant, and this is the cause, or condition, of our being his people. The promise of the covenant does not cast the condition on our side, as if God had said, I will be their God, if they will be my people, or when they come to have a fit disposition for my service ; but the promise runs thus, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* It is as if God had said, my being their God, shall make them my people. All covenants between masters and servants, among men, presuppose the performance of several conditions by the servants, before they can claim their wages

wages as due ; they are not to have the promised rewards, till they have first done the several prescribed duties : this is the nature of all covenants between masters and servants, among men ; but the covenant of grace is in a contrary strain, God first makes over himself to us, in Christ, and then, because he is our God, he makes us willing and able to serve and obey him.

[2.] When we have God to be our God, according to his covenant promise, we have a propriety in God, and in whatsoever renders him a most glorious, adorable, and amiable being. When we have the true God, who is eternal in his existence, omnipotent in his power, unchangeable in his goodness, rich in his mercy, and boundless in his compassions, to be our God and Father in Christ, we have incomparably more than all that is in heaven and earth. When we have God for our God in covenant, he will then do as much for us, as we would do for our selves, if we had the same wisdom, power, and goodness, which God hath, to employ for our own advantage and satisfaction.

If God's almighty power be sufficient to protect us ; if his infinite wisdom can find out the most effectual ways to save us from all evil ; if his inconceivable goodness can satisfy us ; and if the endless enjoyment of him can consummate our happiness ; then may we

we rejoice and break forth into singing, because God is our God. Most happy shall we be, when we come to have a full communion with God, as our covenant God thro' Jesus Christ. When *Isaac* met *Rebekah*, he carry'd her into his mother's tent, that she might have the possession of all that was in it; so if we have God for our God, Christ will meet us when we die; he will carry us into his Father's palace, and will say to us, Behold now all the riches and glory of my Father's house, of which I told you; sit down, enjoy and possess it all, in my right, to eternity. We shall then have the blessings of the everlasting hills, which are the first of all delights, because nothing is before them; and which are the last of all pleasures, because nothing is beyond them.

III. *The application.*

I shall now make some application.

I. If there is the greatest stability in the covenant of grace, and if the best provision is made in it, for the salvation of sinners; then the condition of them is most miserable, who are strangers to the covenant of grace, because they are still under the guilt of all the sins they have committed; they are under the judicial anger of that great and terrible God, whom they have offended; they lie open to all the severe curses of the law

law they have transgress'd; and they are under the hard conditions of the covenant of works, which will break their backs, and bind them down under a weight of endless torments. God will shower down the choicest blessings upon them who are in covenant with him; but he will cast the fury of his wrath upon them who are out of the covenant. The misery of a man cannot be more fully express'd, than to say of him, he is a stranger to the covenant of grace. *Eph. ii. 12. At that time ye were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* The covenant of grace, which is one, is here called the covenants of promise in the plural, because it was at several times published, declared, and confirmed; and because the promises of it were often repeated and renewed. The misery of sinners, in their natural apostate condition, is here express'd most emphatically: it is done in few words; but every word is like a millstone hung about their necks, to plunge them into the deepest hell. If the apostle had vented all his rhetoric in describing their deplorable state, he could not have spoke out their misery in fuller, and more significant terms, than in saying they were strangers to the covenant of grace. To be strangers to the covenant of grace, is made one article of the misery of unregenerate

rate

rate sinners; but all the other things which are here connected with it, inseparably belong to them, who are strangers to the covenant of grace. When sinners live strangers to the covenant of grace, they are without Christ, they are aliens to the commonwealth of *Israel*, they have no hope, and they are without God in the world.

1. When sinners are strangers to the covenant of grace, they are without Christ; they have no union or communion with him: as they are without Christ, they are deprived of all good, and they must have all that is evil. To be without Christ, is that which carries endless destruction in it; because it is to be without him, who is the only person to bear our guilt, to procure the forgiveness of our sins, to satisfy the offended justice of God, to purchase our redemption, and to bring us to glory: to be without Christ, is to have all woe, and nothing but the greatest woe, for ever.

2. When sinners are strangers to the covenant of grace, they are aliens from the community of God's faithful people, which under the old testament was confined to the commonwealth of *Israel*. They may be members of visible churches, which consist of bad and good, of hypocrites and real saints, of pure and impure, of the living and of the dead; but they are divided from that church, which is the mystical body of Christ, and

and comprehends in it all that have been saved, or shall be saved, to the end of the world. They are aliens to this blessed society, and to this pure assembly they are not united.

3. When sinners are strangers to the covenant of grace, they are without hope. They are generally fill'd with that hope, which makes them insensible of their danger, encourages them to sin, without fear, and to meet the avenging justice of God, without trembling; but they can have no true hope of eternal life and happiness. They have that hope which deludes and deceives them, in this life, and will leave them in despair, in the hour of death: but they have nothing of that hope, which has Christ for its object, and the promises of God for its foundation.

4. When sinners are strangers to the covenant of grace, they are without God in the world. When the believers at *Ephesus* were heathens, they were without any true knowledge of God; they had many false Gods, but they were without the true God: some of them knew God, as a creator; but their knowledge of him, as a creator, was nothing, because they knew him not in Christ.

When sinners are under the light of the word, but are strangers to the covenant of grace, they are without God in the world, as really as the *Ephesians* were, in their state of

of heathenism: they are without all believing, sensible apprehensions of the majesty, power, justice, holiness, truth and faithfulness of God; when they acknowlege God in words, they deny him in their deeds, because they live as if there were no God; the series of their wicked actions discovers a predominant principle of atheism in their hearts: they are without him, as the object of their trust and confidence; they have no reliance on him, as that God who can take care of them in this life, and can provide for them in that which is to come: they are without him as their rule; when they fulfil their own wills, they rebel against God's will, and reject him as their lawgiver: they are without him as their end; they set their own sordid lusts above him: and they are without him as their chief good, and as the spring and perfection of their blessedness; they seek satisfaction in things which are but vanity and vexation of spirit, if compared to God.

It is a most doleful condition wherein they are, who are strangers to the covenant of grace: and to them who are so, three things may be said:

(1.) They should take care not to neglect the serious consideration of what God has revealed in his word, of the covenant of grace. If they put the thoughts of it carelessly from them, they will be forced hereafter to remember it for their terror and tor-

ment. It was God's complaint of *Ephraim*, *Hos.* viii. 12. *I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.* It will fill sinners with tormenting reflections, when God will say to them, I declared my covenant to you, but you regarded it no more than if it had been a vain unprofitable speculation. One mark of them who sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, is this, they count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, or a common thing, *Heb. x. 29.* They count the blood of the covenant as a common thing, which hath no transcendent energy and virtue in it. If it be one ingredient in the sin against the Holy Ghost, to count the blood of the covenant a common thing, then they make a near approach to this sin, who despise what God has said of the covenant of grace, as not worthy to be minded and regarded.

(2.) Sinners ought to get a knowlege of their miserable condition, which may be sensible, as well as notional, experimental as well as dogmatical; which may be in their hearts, as well as in their heads; and may not let them live longer in a state of estrangement from God, and enmity against him, without seeking after his good will and favour in Christ.

(3.) Sinners should often pray to God, to enable them to enter into a covenant with him: it is God only can capacitate them for

covenanting with himself. When he takes hold of their hearts, then they will take hold of his strength. They ought to pray to God to change their state, to bring them out of their bondage, and to work in them a yielding willing frame, to cast themselves on his grace, to accept of his promised mercy, to be saved in his way, when they can never be saved in their own, and to give themselves to Christ, as the wife gives her self to her husband.

II. If there is the greatest stability in the covenant of grace, and if the best provision is made in it, for our salvation, then we ought to examin, and to make a diligent enquiry, whether we are in covenant with God. When God hath made an everlasting covenant with us in Christ, he brings us, in time, to enter into a covenant with him, or to take hold of the covenant he hath made with us. Our personal covenanting with God, or our entering into covenant with him, in our own persons, and choosing him for our God, is the accomplishment of the promises of the covenant of grace, to us, and in us. We may know by four things, when we are in covenant with God.

1. When we are in covenant with God, all our former engagements to sin are broke, our love to it is turned into the severest hatred, and instead of looking upon it with delight, we remember it with shame and sorrow:

sorrow: we are then brought to say with *Ephraim*, Hos. xiv. 8. *What have I to do any more with idols?* When we enter into covenant with God, we give a final divorce to all our idols, and put them for ever from us.

2. When we are in covenant with God, his law is written upon our hearts. God, by his Spirit, writes his law upon the hearts of all his children, according to his covenant promise, *Heb.* viii. 10. *I will put my laws into their mind, and I will write them upon their hearts.* *Heb.* x. 16. *I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them.* The law which God writes upon the hearts of his covenant people, is the law which was written upon the heart of *Adam* in paradise, and was defaced by the fall. The inscription of the law upon our hearts, is the renovation of the whole frame of our souls, whereby we are brought to yield obedience to the law of God, written in his word. This inscription of the law of God upon the heart consists of light in the understanding, to approve of the law of God, as it is holy, just, and good; of a motion in the will, to comply with it in all things; and of a delight and pleasure in the affections, to obey it. Every one in covenant with God can say, in some degree, as *David* did, *Psal.* cxix. 47. *I will delight my self in thy commandments which I have loved.*

loved. When the law of God is written upon our hearts, we give up our selves to God, by a free consent, to serve and obey him. When God makes himself known to us, as our God, we consent to be his, and choose him for our sovereign lord, and supreme governor.

3. When we are in covenant with God, we believe in Christ, as he is a priest; we obey him, as he is a prophet, in all the external teachings of his word, and in all the internal teachings of his Spirit; and we submit to him as a king: when we expect justification, only by his righteousness, we submit to his authority, as a king, in all his institutions, and wilfully neglect none of them.

4. When we are in covenant with God, we have a superlative esteem for Christ. The weakest faith puts the highest value on Christ, and makes a believer say of Christ, what *Solomon* said of wisdom, *Prov. iii. 15.* *She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared to her.* A doubting desponding believer, who hath the darkest apprehensions of his state, would not part with his glimmering, remote hope in Christ, for all the riches and treasures of this world. It may be said, how may we know that we have a greater value for Christ, than for all other things? I answer, we may know it by two things.

(1.) When

(1.) When we are so affected with the excellencies of Christ, that all other things are as nothing to us, in comparison of him. They who have the greatest stock of natural speculative knowledge, prefer the most vile, sordid lust, before Christ; but they who have the lowest degree of a true vital experimental knowledge of Christ, with the Apostle count all things as loss, when they come to stand in competition with Christ Jesus. Phil. iii. 3. *I count all things but loss, for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.*

(2.) When we are not offended at any thing in the ways and institutions of Christ. There is a blessing upon them, who are not stumbled at any thing in Christ, Matth. xi. 6. *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* Nothing more argues a low apprehension of Christ, than when we are soon and easily discouraged in owning his truths; but our love to Christ is sincere and strong, when neither the rage of men, nor the calvils and slanders of Atheists, nor the fear of losing the profits and pleasures of this world, can hinder us from following him.

III. If there is the greatest stability in the covenant of grace, and if the best provision is made in it, for our salvation, then if we have ground to hope we have taken hold of the covenant of grace, we must seek to know more of it. The covenant of grace is a mystery,

stery, which is no more known, than it is valued, by unregenerate sinners. They who have blind minds, have no spiritual knowledge of it. When we have got some knowledge of it, as God hath revealed it in his Word, we must, by frequent meditations, and by the light of the divine Spirit, look more narrowly into it, through all the dark valleys of our own obscurity: We may be pressed to do this by five things.

1. If we had a clearer discovery of the covenant of grace, our affections would be less intangled and enslaved by the vanities of this world, and our hearts would be more fixed on the things which are heavenly and eternal. If we had a more enlarged knowledge of the covenant of grace, heaven would be uppermost in our hearts, and we should be more like the church, which is described with the moon under her feet, Revel. xii. 1. *There appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman cloathed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.* Every believer is cloathed with Christ, the sun of righteousness, as the woman was, who in John's vision was the representative of all true believers, and his head is crowned with the excellent purity of the truths of the gospel, which were preached by the twelve Apostles: when he is cloathed with the sun, and when his head is crowned with twelve stars, he must have the

the moon, which is the glory of all earthly things, under his feet: When he hath the crown and flower of earthly comforts for his use, he must have them under his feet, and his heart above them, because they are variable and changeable like the moon.

2. The more we know of the covenant of grace, the higher shall we rise in the admiration of the love of God, which is revealed to us in it, and the more shall our hearts be enlarged in blessing God for his goodness. It was infinite condescension in God, to covenant with innocent *Adam*, what is it then for him, to covenant with us who are wretched sinners? If a great prince, when he is carried in triumph through his capital city, should neglect to contemplate his own splendor, and to listen to the applauses and acclamations of his own people, and should fasten his eye on a beggar full of putrified sores, this would be cried up as a wonderful condescension, and yet it would be nothing to the condescension of God, in espousing us to himself in Christ Jesus, who are not only indigent beggars, but most sinful creatures. When we think on this, we ought to be fill'd with astonishment, to bow our souls before God, and to adore him with the greatest reverence; like *Abraham*, who fell flat on his face, when God was about to reveal something of the covenant of grace to him, *Gen. xvii. 23.*

When

When God comes down to us, shall not we stoop before him? When we can hear of God's condescending to espouse sinners to himself, and not be humbled with the sight of our sinfulness, and melted with the consideration of God's infinite love, we are insensible of our misery; we know nothing of the riches of God's grace, and we see not the vileness of our depraved nature.

3. The whole fabric of our salvation, which is a most beautiful, glorious structure, is contrived in the covenant of grace, and is supported by it. It is the pillar that supports the house which infinite wisdom built: it is as the hinge, whereon all the vast designs of God's wisdom, love and mercy turn and move. All that God carries on by the death and sufferings of his Son, by the Spirit of grace, by the terrors of the law, and by the invitations and promises of the gospel, and all that he brings about by the justification, regeneration, perseverance and glorification of believers, is summ'd up and contain'd in the covenant of grace. All that God does for believers here, and all that he will do for them hereafter; will be to raise the frame of their salvation higher, till it be wonderful beyond all admiration, and far above all imaginable proportions and dimensions.

4. Eternity will be spent by the saints in heaven, to take a full view of the covenant of grace, and of the glories of it. If this will be the work of heaven, then we ought in our imperfect state to labour after a further knowlege of it. The knowlege which we have of the covenant of grace in this life, is no more comparable to what we shall have of it in heaven, than the idea a child hath of a stately edifice, when the ground-work of it is only laid, is to the notion a skilful builder hath of it, when it is perfected.

5. The covenant of grace is a treasury, wherein all good is laid up for us; it is all our salvation: we need no more than a sight of it by faith, to comfort us in our greatest sorrows. *Ps. xxv. 14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.* The secret of the Lord is the love of God to his people in Christ; it is as one continued stream of living water, which ran under ground from everlasting, and broke out in time. The secret of God's everlasting love is made known to his people in the covenant of grace, wherein is stored up for them all the blessings they can ever receive: It is for this reason said, *he will shew them his covenant.* All grace is in the covenant, primarily, eminently and comprehensively. If a most wealthy prince should carry a beggar

gar into a place so wide and spacious that he could not see from one end of it to another, wherein the greatest riches and choicest rarities are gathered together, if he should lead him from one heap of pearls and diamonds to another, and then should say to him, all this I give thee most freely, it shall henceforth be all thine, and it shall not be taken from thee; how would this beggar be transported with joy, and what satisfaction would he take in this noble and ample gift? If the most opulent prince should do thus by a beggar, it would not be a shadow of what God does to a believer, when he shews him his covenant, and what is treasured up in it for him. When God shews a believer the covenant of grace, he leads him into the treasury of his inexhaustible bounty, gives him a sight of the works of glory, and of all the marvellous blessings which Christ hath purchaseth, and then says, I will keep nothing of this back from thee, but will give it all to thee for my Son's sake, and will speedily put thee into the full possession of it. When God by his word and spirit speaks thus to a believer, what can he then want? He may sing in a wilderness, and in a time of drought, he may with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation: if he is poor in this world, he knows that he shall be enrich'd out of measure in the next: if his name be like to be forgot-

forgotten on earth, he shall have an everlasting name, that can never be cut off. In the greatest distress, in the sharpest afflictions, under the heaviest burdens, and the most grating disappointments, he may comfort himself with the thoughts of what is provided for him in the covenant of grace: he may bid his soul take its full rest and ease, because he hath not only much goods laid up for many years, but he hath all that is universally, supremely and sovereignly good laid up for him to eternity. When our thoughts are not engaged in pondering and ruminating upon the covenant of grace, to search after, and to get more raised apprehensions of it, we lose the marrow and sweetness of gospel-revelations, and know but little of that rich and glorious inheritance, which is reserved in heaven for us.

Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in us what is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever; Amen.

F I N I S.



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